GUITAR ONE PRESENTS

BLUES LEGENDS

4 SONGS
WITH BASS LINES

ALLMAN BROTHERS
STORMY MONDAY

FREDDIE KING
HIDE AWAY

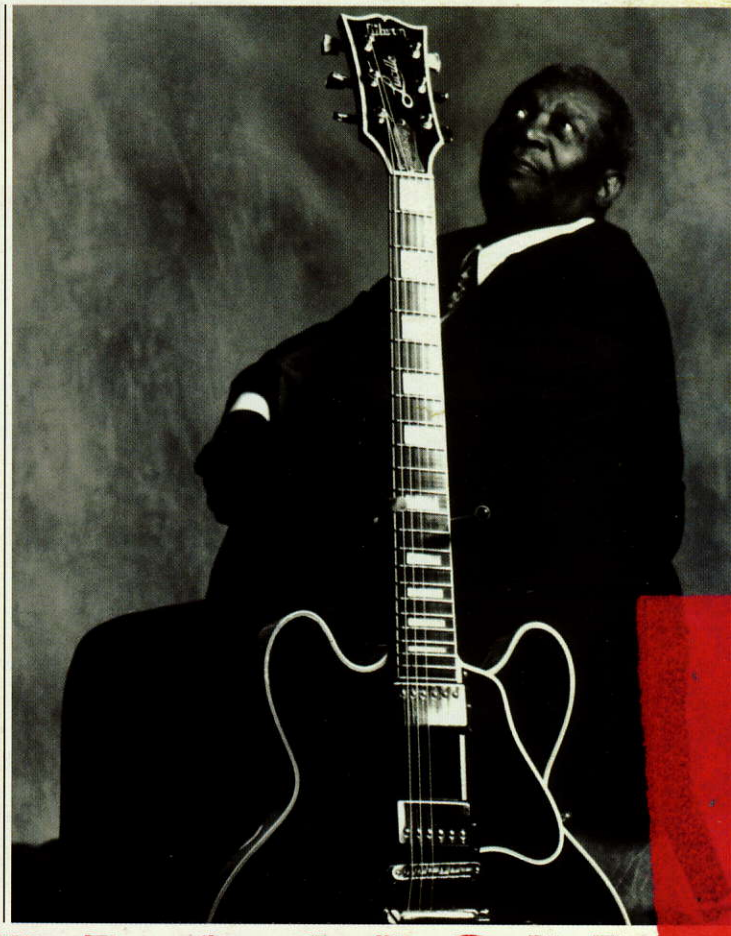
STEVIE RAY VAUGHA
LITTLE WING

BLIND BLAKE
WABASH RAG

HISTORIC INTERVIEWS WITH

ERIC CLAPTON
B.B. KING
BUDDY GUY
HUBERT SUMLIN
ALBERT KING

25 MUST-HAVE BLUES ALBUMS



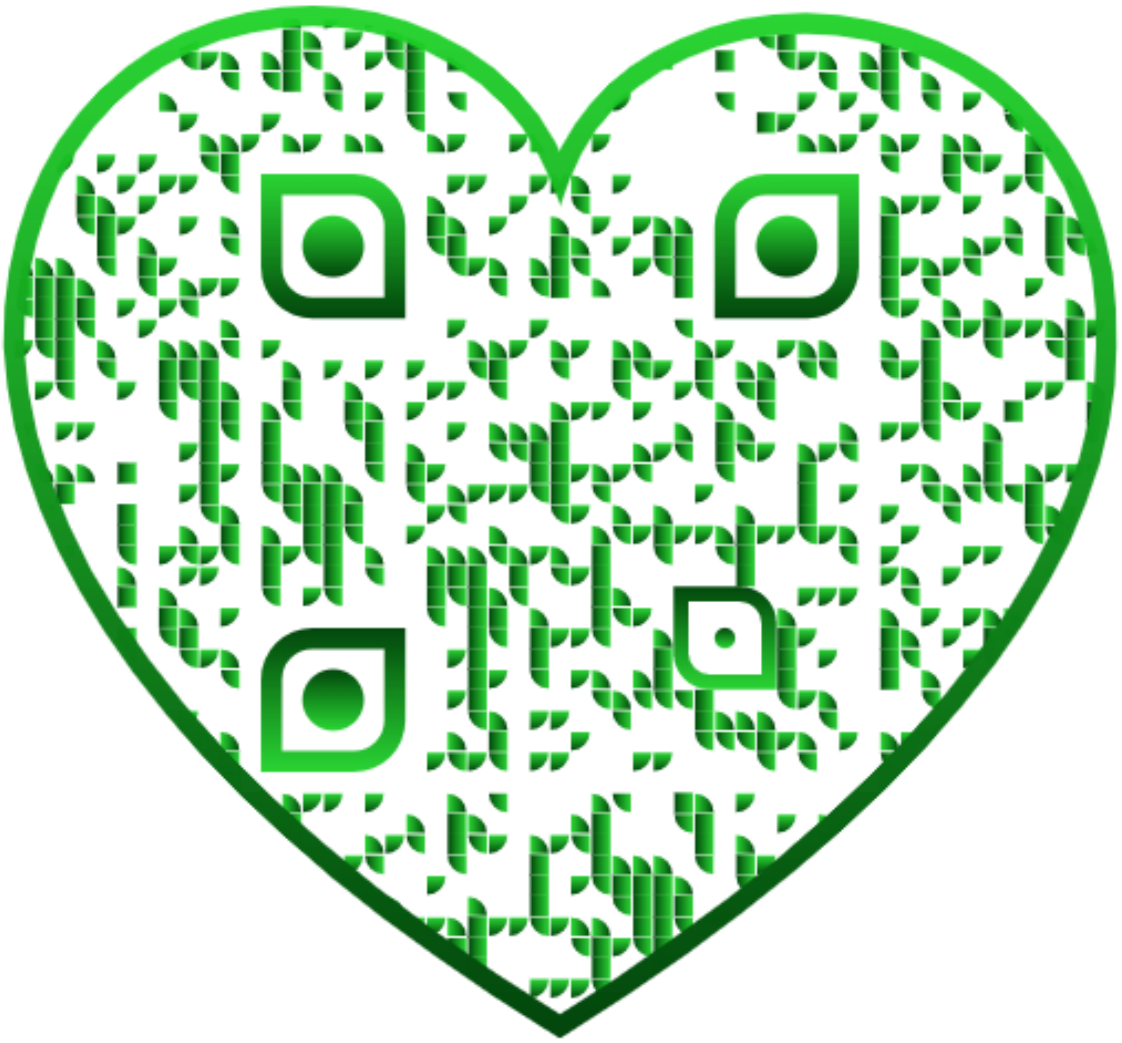
BLUES EXPLOSION

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

★ MUDDY WATERS ★
★ JOHN LEE HOOKER ★
★ ROBERT JOHNSON ★
★ FREDDIE KING ★

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN: THE COMPLETE STORY

$5.99US
92>
0 70992 38756 4
Future
MEDIA WITH PASSION
Display Until July 7, 2009



GUITAR ONE PRESENTS
BLUES LEGENDS

EDITORIAL
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR **Brad Tolinski**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF **Jeff Kitts**
EXECUTIVE EDITOR **Christopher Scapelliti**
SENIOR EDITOR **Brad Angle**

MUSIC
SENIOR MUSIC EDITOR **Jimmy Brown**
MUSIC EDITOR **Matt Scharfglass**
MUSIC ENGRAVERS
Staccato Media Group, Inc., MusiComp, Inc.
MUSIC CLEARANCE AND COPYRIGHTS
Richard Bienstock

ART
DESIGN DIRECTOR **Alexis Cook**
ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR **Nicholas Rezabek**
PHOTOGRAPHY DIRECTOR **Jimmy Hubbard**
ASSISTANT PHOTOGRAPHY DIRECTOR **John Langford**
DIGITAL IMAGING SPECIALIST **Justin Phillips**

EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING OFFICES
149 5th Ave., 9th Floor, New York, NY 10010
(212) 768-2966; FAX: (212) 944-9279
EMAIL **soundingboard@guitarworld.com**
WEB PAGE **guitarworld.com**

BUSINESS
VP/PUBLISHING DIRECTOR, MUSIC **Anthony Danzi**
adanzi@futureus.com
PUBLISHER **Greg Di Benedetto**
greg@guitarworld.com
ADVERTISING SALES **Jason Perl**
646-723-5419, jperl@futureus.com
ADVERTISING SALES **Scott Sciacca**
646-723-5478, ssciacca@futureus.com
ADVERTISING SALES **Jeff Tyson**
646-723-5421, jtyson@futureus.com
AD COORDINATOR **Anna Blumenthal**
646-723-5404, anna@guitarworld.com
MARKETING MANAGER **Chris Campana**
646-723-5416, ccampana@futureus.com

PRODUCTION
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR **Richie Lesovoy**
PRODUCTION COORDINATOR **Nicole Schilling**
PRINT ORDER COORDINATOR **Linh Chau-Ward**

CONSUMER MARKETING
DIRECTOR CONSUMER MARKETING
Rich McCarthy
GROUP CIRCULATION DIRECTOR **Peter Kelly**
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR **Crystal Hudson**
NEWSSTAND DIRECTOR **Bill Shewey**
CONSUMER MARKETING OPERATIONS DIRECTOR
Lisa Radler
RENEWAL & BILLING MANAGER **Mike Hill**
BUSINESS MANAGER **Elliot Kiger**
SR. ONLINE CONSUMER MARKETING MANAGER
Jennifer Trinkner
CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER **Mike Frassica**

FUTURE US, INC.
4000 Shoreline Court, Suite 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080
www.futureus.com

PRESIDENT **Jonathan Simpson-Bint**
VP/CFO **John Sutton**
VP/PUBLISHING DIRECTOR **Stacey Levy**
VP INTERNET DEVELOPMENT **Tyson Daugherty**
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR GAMES GROUP **Stephen Pierce**
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR TECH **Jon Phillips**
GENERAL COUNSEL **Charlotte Falla**
HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR **Nancy Durlester DuBois**

Future
MEDIA WITH PASSION

Future US, Inc. is part of Future plc. Future US, Inc. produces carefully targeted special-interest magazines for people who share a passion. We aim to satisfy that passion by creating titles that offer value for money, reliable information and smart buying advice, and which are a pleasure to read. Over 100 international editions of our magazines are also published in 30 other countries across the world.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR).
ISSN 1045-6295

NON-EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN **Roger Parry**
CHIEF EXECUTIVE **Stevie Spring**
GROUP FINANCE DIRECTOR **John Bowman**
Tel +44 1225 442244
www.futureplc.com

TRANSCRIBED
(BASS LINES INCLUDED)

64 "LITTLE WING" BY STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN
72 "HIDE AWAY" BY FREDDIE KING
76 "WABASH RAG" BY BLIND BLAKE
78 "STORMY MONDAY" BY THE ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND

CONTENTS

FEATURES

10 25 ESSENTIAL BLUES ALBUMS
Not sure where to begin digging into the blues? Take a peek at this A-to-Z list of must-have acoustic and electric blues recordings.

12 STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN
Guitar World presents the explosive history of the man who saved the blues and then himself, only to die a tragic death. As told by SRV and his closest friends and associates.

24 BUDDY GUY
Jimi Hendrix learned at his feet. Eric Clapton calls him "the greatest living guitarist." In this insightful interview, blues legend Buddy Guy reveals the stories behind his greatest recordings.

34 B.B. KING
B.B. King contemplates mortality and reflects on the guitar heroes of his youth with *One Kind Favor*, his 2008 album of classic blues interpretations.

44 ERIC CLAPTON
Blues purist. Guitar god. Pop star. Eric Clapton has been all these and more. In this exhaustive, wide-ranging interview, rock's great survivor reflects on his tumultuous journey.

54 HUBERT SUMLIN
As Howlin' Wolf's guitarist, Hubert Sumlin contributed to some of the greatest blues sides ever recorded. The Wolf's been dead for 33 years, but Sumlin's still Howlin'.

58 ALBERT KING
The man who once claimed to have invented blues power may have been telling the truth. In an interview given shortly before his death, Albert King explains how his unorthodox playing style and killer tone electrified the blues.

AX MUSEUMS

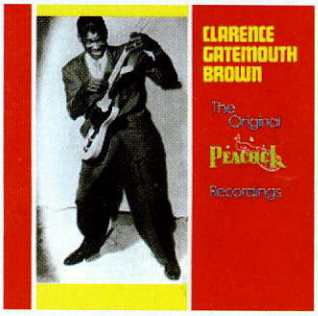
22 ROBERT JOHNSON
The king of the Delta blues, Robert Johnson went down to the crossroads and came back a legend.

32 JOHN LEE HOOKER
The King of the Boogie ruled the blues for more than half a century.

42 MUDDY WATERS
How a part-time farmer named McKinley Morganfield became a full-time Delta blues guitarist and forever changed the course of music.

52 FREDDIE KING
Long before such Lone Star legends as Stevie Ray Vaughan and Billy Gibbons played their first licks, Freddie King was showing the world how to rip it up Texas-style.

COVER PHOTOGRAPHS: **DON HUNSTEIN** (STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN) **LUCIANO VITI / RETNA UK** (B.B. KING) **HOWARD DENNER / RETNA UK** (CLAPTON) **RAYON RICHARDS** (BUDDY GUY) **JAMES FRAHER/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES** (HUBERT SUMLIN)



CLARENCE "GATEMOUTH" BROWN
The Original Peacock Recordings

THESE EARLY FIFTIES sessions capture the Texas guitarist in his swinging prime, particularly on such classics as "Okie Dokie Stomp" and "Depression Blues." Jazz meets blues when Gate's on the gig.

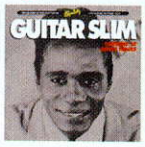
ALBERT COLLINS
Ice Pickin'

ALL OF ALBERT'S Alligator sessions are marked by his signature intensity, but this—his first—bursts with the energy of a great talent suppressed for too long. His first album in seven years, *Ice Pickin'* marked the beginning of Collins' re-emergence as a contemporary blues guitar powerhouse. It was his finest studio date.

ALBERT COLLINS, ROBERT CRAY AND JOHNNY COPELAND
Showdown

THIS LOOSE, freewheeling jam session features Cray's most intense moments to date. It's also a career highlight for longtime blues journeyman Copeland, while Collins is in his usual fine form. *Showdown* is an excellent starting point for novices of the Texas sound.

GUITAR SLIM
Sufferin' Mind



EDDIE "GUITAR Slim" Jones was a major influence on guitarists ranging from Buddy Guy to Jimi Hendrix. His crazed, slashing guitar work was rooted in the Texas jump blues of T-Bone Walker and Gatemouth Brown, but it was unique and utterly original. This disc includes the blues standard "The Things I Used to Do."

25 ESSENTIAL BLUES ALBUMS

NOT SURE WHERE TO BEGIN DIGGING INTO THE BLUES? TAKE A PEEK AT THIS A-TO-Z LIST OF MUST-HAVE ACOUSTIC AND ELECTRIC BLUES RECORDINGS.

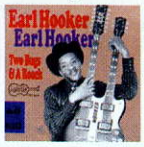
FROM STORE SHELVES to online retailers of CDs and MP3s, there is no shortage of places from which to discover classic blues guitarists and their music. That's great, but the wealth of material available can be daunting for the uninitiated. Which of the 200 or so available John Lee Hooker titles is best? And which version of Elmore James' "Dust My Broom" is the right one to buy?

Well, take a load off. We've compiled this guide to the finest electric and acoustic blues guitar music ever recorded, to help you navigate the deep and wild river they call the blues. Read it and take it to heart—for as any blues guitarist will tell you, it pays to be prepared.

BUDDY GUY
A Man and the Blues

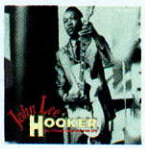
THIS 1968 release marked Guy's debut as a solo artist. He is in characteristically over-the-top form, singing and wailing the blues on his Strat with equal fervor. A frenzied masterpiece.

EARL HOOKER
Two Bugs & A Roach

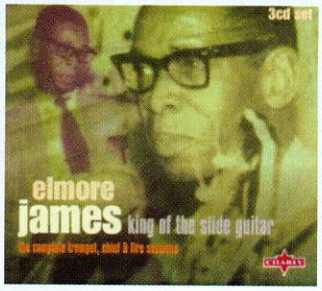


JOHN LEE'S cousin is one of the true unsung treasures of the blues. His Chicago peers widely regarded him as the most well-rounded guitarist on the blues scene. This collection is a fine introduction.

JOHN LEE HOOKER
The Ultimate Collection



THIS IS AN excellent collection that lives up to its billing. It's probably all the John Lee Hooker you'll ever need, and it makes an invaluable guide to the stacks and stacks of his available discs.



ELMORE JAMES
King of the Slide Guitar

THESE SLIDE-POWERED tunes culled from 1959 to '63 demonstrate how far one man can go with an electrifying tone, a classic riff and a lot of hysteria. It includes not one but two inspired renditions of "Dust My Broom," as well as "The Sky Is Crying," "Shake Your Moneymaker" and "Done Somebody Wrong."

ALBERT KING
The Ultimate Collection

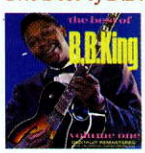
FEW BLUES players have had as profound an impact on rock guitarists as King. This two-CD collection offers up reams of macho, aggressive overbending and makes a fine

career overview. SRV devotees should also check out *Live Wire/Blues Power*.

B.B. KING
Live at the Regal

THIS DISC DOCUMENTS a legendary 1964 performance by a legendary artist. The King puts his great voice, sweet tone and signature vibrato to work on such staples as "It's My Own Fault," "Every Day I Have the Blues" and "Sweet Little Angel." It's a treasure trove of sophisticated, yet down-home, blues.

B.B. KING
The Best of B.B. King, Vol. One

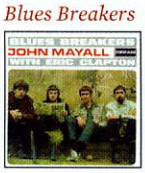


FILLED WITH THE licks that inspired thousands of would-be Kings, this reissue features B.B.'s early work, which makes it very great, indeed. Among the treasures are the original versions of "You Upset Me Baby," "Three O'Clock Blues" and "5 Long Years."

FREDDIE KING
Hide Away: The Best of Freddy King

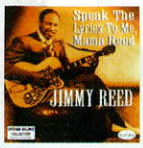
THIS ANTHOLOGY includes stellar vocal tracks like "Have You Ever Loved a Woman," but the highlights are the instrumentals—including the original "Hide Away"—which have enough tasty blues licks to satisfy even the most ravenous riffmongers. Eric Clapton fans are advised to check this one out.

JOHN MAYALL WITH ERIC CLAPTON
Blues Breakers



E.C. PLAYS Chicago style with impressively precocious authority on this album, which turned countless rock fans on to the blues. It's Clapton's most purist album and the work that inspired so many to declare him "god."

JIMMY REED
Speak the Lyrics to Me, Mama Reed



REED WAS a great songwriter, while his longtime partner Eddie Taylor helped write the book on Chicago blues guitar. This collection includes the blues standards "Baby What You Want Me to Do," "Big Boss Man" and "Bright Lights, Big City," as well as 22 other stellar examples of Reed's mellow boogie beats.

FENTON ROBINSON
Somebody Loan Me a Dime

UNDERRATED throughout his career, Robinson colors his jazz-tinged playing with all manner of dynamic subtleties. This is his best album, and the title track is a bona fide masterpiece.

OTIS RUSH
Cobra Recordings, 1956–1958

THIS ALBUM features classic Otis Rush tunes like "All Your Love," which gave certain British guitarists something to practice, and "Double Trouble," which gave SRV the name of his band. The Cobra label's heavily reverberated treatment of Rush's vocal histrionics and passionate soloing make these tracks among the most terrifying in all bluesdom.

MAGIC SAM
West Side Soul

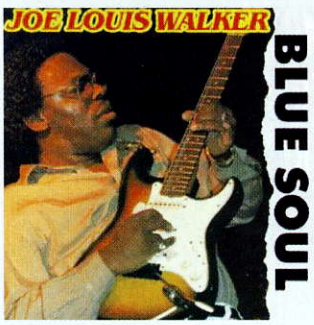
THE LATE MAGIC Sam Maghett fully lived up to his nickname on this 1968 album, casting an exuberant spell with his soaring vocals and rapid, clean-toned guitar lines.

SON SEALS
Live and Burning

In his prime, Son Seals played vicious machine-gun blues with a Guild Starfire and sang with a marvelous rage. This live performance, recorded in the late Seventies, captures Seals at his ferocious best.

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN AND DOUBLE TROUBLE
In Step

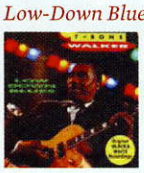
STEVIE RAY'S FINAL ALBUM with Double Trouble was also his finest, featuring consistently scalding guitar work—the solos in "Crossfire" and "Tightrope" are hot enough to trigger smoke detectors all across Texas. With *In Step*, Vaughan joined the three Kings, Albert Collins and Buddy Guy in the pantheon of modern blues greats.



JOE LOUIS WALKER
Blue Soul

THIS IS PERHAPS the finest album by one of contemporary blues' finest guitarists. It includes grooving R&B ("Ain't Nothin' Going On"), biting acoustic slide ("I'll Get to Heaven on My Own") and crazed, searing, overdriven slow blues à la Buddy Guy ("City of Angels").

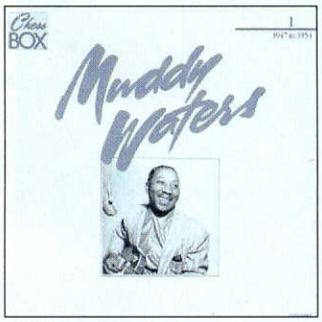
T-BONE WALKER
Low-Down Blues



WALKER'S beautifully tempered, sophisticated playing had a decisive impact on B.B. King, Buddy Guy and their bluesy ilk, while it also made its mark on Chuck Berry and the world of rock guitarists. This is his peak stuff.

JOHNNY "GUITAR" WATSON
3 Hours Past Midnight

EXTREMELY intense and wild, Watson was a major influence on Jimi Hendrix. Sort of a more modern, extroverted Gatemouth Brown.



MUDDY WATERS
The Chess Box

THIS THREE-CD SET is a box of blues gold. Waters' association with Chess lasted for 25 years, and this collection includes the cream of a very extensive crop of recordings. They're all here—Muddy's slide classics ("Honey Bee," "Rollin' and Tumblin' "), his hits ("Hoochie Coochie Man," "I'm Ready") and his later triumphs ("You Can't Lose What You Ain't Never Had").

JOHNNY WINTER
Johnny Winter

THE WHITE tornado blew out of Texas and into the national spotlight with this album of jaw-dropping, high-intensity blues. It's more focused and less rock-oriented than anything that followed.

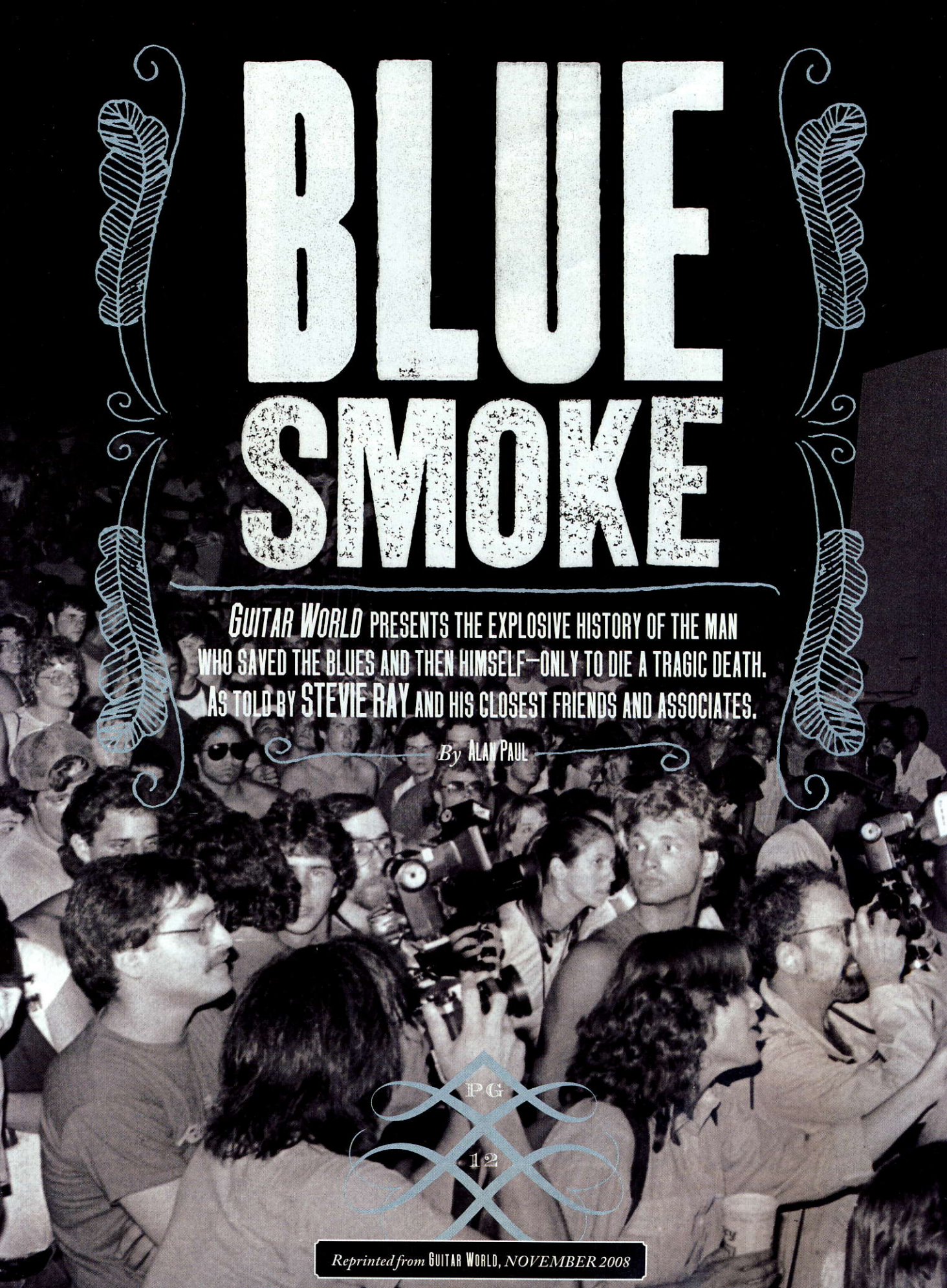
HOWLIN' WOLF
Moanin in the Moonlight/ Howlin' Wolf

THIS TWO-ALBUMS-IN-ONE-CD collection offers an excellent sampling of Hubert Sumlin's masterful guitar work. It's maximum grunge by the guitarist who influenced a generation of rockers. **BL**

BLUE SMOKE

GUITAR WORLD PRESENTS THE EXPLOSIVE HISTORY OF THE MAN WHO SAVED THE BLUES AND THEN HIMSELF—ONLY TO DIE A TRAGIC DEATH. AS TOLD BY STEVIE RAY AND HIS CLOSEST FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES.

By ALAN PAUL



Reprinted from GUITAR WORLD, *NOVEMBER 2008*

LARRY BUSACCA/RETNA LTD.

Playing at Pier 84 in New York City, August 10, 1985

NINE YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH, Stevie Ray Vaughan's influence only continues to grow. It can be heard in barrooms and arenas around the globe, in the playing of everyone from protégés like Kenny Wayne Shepherd to mentors like Buddy Guy to younger rockers like Mike McCready and Kirk Hammett. It can be seen in the popularity of vintage gear and straight-forward, ear-ringing tone, both of which were considered passe before Stevie proved that there was plenty of life left in Stratocasters and tube amps.

But perhaps the most telling statement about Stevie's continued relevance is that his music still speaks volumes to millions of listeners. Some voices are stilled by death, but his has only grown louder.

"Unfortunately, you never fully grasp someone's greatness or importance until they're gone," says B.B. King. "And I think that's true with Stevie. As the years go by and he's not here, it just becomes more and more clear how special he was, and how much he's missed."

Missed so much that hungry fans eagerly await news of "lost" SRV tracks discovered in the vaults, crossing their fingers with the hope that a mother lode of unreleased material sits waiting to be unearthed and aired.

At least some of these prayers were answered on March 23, 1999, when Sony Legacy released Stevie's four studio albums with Double Trouble (Texas Flood, Couldn't Stand the Weather, Soul to Soul and In Step), each of them updated with four bonus tracks recorded in the same time frame as the original.

To understand what made Stevie tick, to get the whole story of the man behind the music, we turned to his closest confidantes, the people who knew him best and miss him the most. Given the opportunity to tell Stevie's tale, they opened up, revealing things they'd never revealed before. The result is a portrait of an artist completely dedicated to his craft, and of a man who had wrestled with his demons and emerged victorious, with a new lease on life and a rededicated passion for his life's work. Stevie Ray was undoubtedly making the finest music of his life when he died at age 35. This is his story, as told by his best friends and biggest heroes—and the one soul best qualified to do so: himself.

You know the music. Now meet the man.

In the Beginning

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN I got my first guitar when I was seven. It was one of those Roy Rogers guitars; it had pictures of cowboys and cows on it, some rope. I had a blanket that had the same shit on it, too. When I was real young, [*western swing band*] the Texas Playboys hung out at our house all the time. My parents played "42" [*dominoes*], and they'd come over and get drunk. Those guys hung around a lot, they'd do some playing, and we'd hear their stuff. Mainly, we'd hear them talking about it. There were a lot of *characters* hanging around. Every once in a while, my dad would yell [*affects heavy rural Texas accent*], "Hey, Jim, Steve, come out here and show them what you can do!" And we were little midgets, with guitars hangin' on us that were this big!

JIMMIE VAUGHAN I went straight for the blues, because that's what sounded best to me; I can't tell you why. It spoke to me more than country, which was the other thing I heard all the time. A lot of my relatives were country musicians, and I never even tried to play country. All my relatives looked at me like, What in the world are you doing? but I just said, "I like *this*." And I never thought about it again.

SRV When we started off, I knew how Jimmy Reed sounded, but I couldn't play it right. And Jimmie would set me straight. A lot of the time, I just watched him play. Jimmie turned me on to a lot of different stuff. I remember several different things: him bringing home records by Hendrix, Buddy Guy, Muddy Waters, B.B. King. The first record I ever bought was "Wham," by Lonnie Mack, from 1963, [*which*] was a great record. I played it so many times, my dad got mad and broke it! When I didn't think it could be any louder, I went and borrowed somebody's Shure Vocal Master P.A., put mics in front of the stereo speakers, and turned the P.A. up! It was *loud* in my room.

JIMMIE VAUGHAN When we were real little, my dad had a job which required him to travel around the South, and we all trailed around. It was real tough—going to schools for two weeks at a time, always uprooting. In a way, it was perfect training for the life we eventually lived as musicians, on the road all the time. Then we settled back in Dallas, when I was in first grade, in Oak Cliff, which was a real rough place. Pretty much everyone we grew up with is either dead or in jail. And I think we latched onto the guitar as a way out pretty early on. The guitar took Stevie around the world. It introduced him to his heroes. It was his instrument of liberation, his magic sword. It meant everything; I can't even fathom Stevie without a guitar. It allowed him to express himself like never before, to have an identity. When Stevie played, his guitar literally talked. If you listen, you can hear it. You can hear *him* speaking through his guitar. I showed him the way initially, but he found his voice himself.

SRV Jimmie showed me a lot of stuff, but there was also a time when he warned, "If you ask me to show you anything again, I'll kick your ass." Well, I did and he did.

DOYLE BRAMHALL Jimmie and I were in a band called the Chessmen together when we were teenagers in Dallas. He was 15 and I was 17, so I could drive and he couldn't, and I would go by and pick him up. One time—this was sometime in 1966—he wasn't ready so he waved me in. I was sitting in the living room, waiting, and Jimmie walked from the back bedroom to the kitchen and I heard this guitar playing going on from the other direction. I walked down the hall and a bedroom door was a little ajar. I looked and there was this little skinny 12-year-old kid sitting on the bed, playing Jeff Beck's "Jeff's Boogie." As soon as he saw me, he stopped playing and I said, "Don't stop." He gave me this shy little smile and said, "Hi, I'm Stevie," and I said, "Hi. I'm Doyle. Keep playing. You're very good." Thirty seconds later, Jimmie ran up and said, "Let's go."

TOMMY SHANNON In 1969, I was playing with Johnny Winter, did Woodstock and everything. When we broke up, I flew back to Dallas and one day dropped by this club called the Fog, where I had met Johnny. I walked in and heard this unbelievable guitar player. A bunch of people were talking to me and I just ignored them 'cause I was looking to see who was making this big sound. I looked up and saw this scrawny little 14- or 15-year-old kid just wailing away. It was Stevie. He was real awkward and shy and looking up at the big guys around him, really intimidated. In fact, he said once in an interview that I was the only one who would talk to him, and I told him the truth. I said, "You're already better than all these guys." He gave me a big smile and we made friends right then and there.

DENNY FREEMAN Jimmie and Stevie were both better than most people ever get the first time I heard them play—when they were 16 or 17.

BRAMHALL There was really only one place in Dallas, the Cellar, where you could play Muddy Waters on 10. So in about 1970, Jimmie and I and a bunch of other guys decided to move to Austin, where there were more places to play and it was cheaper to live. It was like a little San Francisco; you could come down here and express yourself, and people left you alone to do

Cast of Characters

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN
Born October 3, 1954, Dallas, Texas. Died August 27, 1990, East Troy, Wisconsin. All quotes within taken from *Guitar World* interviews.

JIMMIE VAUGHAN
Stevie Ray's older brother and primary guitar influence

DOYLE BRAMHALL
Songwriting partner and longtime friend and bandmate

TOMMY SHANNON
Double Trouble bass player

DENNY FREEMAN
Guitarist, fellow Dallas native and bandmate of both Stevie and Jimmie

DR. JOHN
New Orleans blues pianist and guitarist, and SRV friend

B.B. KING
King of the blues, and godfather to all blues guitarists

RAY HENNIG
Owner of Heart of Texas music shop; sold Stevie his "Number One" Strat

ANGELA STREHLI
Austin blues singer; taught Stevie "Texas Flood"

WC CLARK
Austin guitarist who played bass in and co-fronted the Triple Threat Revue with Stevie and singer Lou Ann Barton

CHRIS LAYTON
Double Trouble drummer

BONNIE RAITT
Slide-guitar diva and close friend of SRV

ERIC CLAPTON
British blues guitar great; friend and admirer of SRV

DICKEY BETTS
Guitarist/frontman for Great Southern, and former Allman Brothers Band guitarist

REESE WYNANS
Double Trouble keyboardist

JIM GAINES
In Step producer

BUDDY GUY
Chicago blues guitar legend; friend of, and hero to, SRV

SRV with Double Trouble's Tommy Shannon (left) and Chris Layton, September 1983

your thing. We started having a little scene, and about a year later, Stevie moved there with his band, Blackbird.

I was still playing with Jimmie, doing mostly straight blues, but Stevie and I both wanted to branch out a little more. We were listening to people like Marvin Gaye and Sly Stone and wanted to incorporate some of that stuff into our music, so Stevie and I found each other getting together more often. In late '72, he called me up and told me that he had gotten a phone call from Marc Benno, who had a deal with A&M and a big tour lined up, and needed to put together a Texas blues-rock band to do it. We went out to L.A. to record, and it was a new kick for us just to be out of Texas. Other than little trips to Oklahoma or Louisiana, I don't think any of us had even left the state.

We were in L.A. for two weeks, riding around in limos and living like rock stars. We recorded seven songs—including "Dirty Pool," which was the first song Stevie and I wrote together—and three of them are actually good, and should be heard. Then we went on a short tour with Humble Pie and the J. Geils Band. We played seven or eight gigs in places like Detroit, Chicago and New York, and it was our first time out in the big world. Unfortunately, however, music took a back seat to drinking and drugging—especially for me—so while we played some good music, it was pretty much a mess, and I guess the label hated it. So we ended up back in Austin and decided to keep the band together, as the Nightcrawlers. That lasted a while, and when it fell apart, Stevie went back to California for a while, then came back and joined Paul Ray and the Cobras, with Denny Freeman.

"WHEN I HEARD 'PRIDE AND JOY' ON THE RADIO, I SAID 'HALLELUJAH.' STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN SINGLE-HANDEDLY BROUGHT GUITAR- AND BLUES-ORIENTED MUSIC BACK TO THE MARKETPLACE." —DICKEY BETTS

FREEMAN I was the Cobras' sole guitar player before Stevie joined, so it was a little tough to have him join. But it was also really exciting to play with him.

DR. JOHN Stevie had this real boyish charm. He kept this very appealing childhood innocence about him—even when he wasn't innocent at all.

B.B. KING He reminded me of my sons when they were about seven or eight years old. He just had so many questions, and would just follow me around, happy and smiling and eager to please.

FREEMAN Stevie almost didn't talk about anything except guitars and music. He was just completely obsessed with it, and so was I. Those were just fun, exciting days because we were just discovering stuff and were excited about everything, and we would just sit around for hours talking about music.

RAY HENNIG I've owned a guitar store since 1960 and have seen a lot of great musicians, but I don't believe I've ever come across anyone half as obsessed with the guitar as Stevie was. He used to hang out in my store, just noodling on guitars all the time. I would say that he was one of my best customers, except he didn't have any money—he was broke all the time—so he never paid for anything in those days. He used to come by on his way to a gig and ask for a pack of strings. I'd toss him one and he'd say, "Hey, if I make any money tonight, I'll pay you." And he would. I lent him guitars all the time. He'd take them for a week or two, then bring them back.

One day in '74, he brought back a nice Strat he had been borrowing and was looking through all the instruments when he came to his ol' beater. He picked it up and must have played around with it for half an hour, just making chords, turning it over, looking at it, weighing it, before he asked if he could plug it in. I said, "Sure, but it sure is ugly." So he plugged in and played for an hour or so then told me he wanted it, and asked if he could swap it for the one he had just returned. I said, "Well, you're ripping yourself off. That has got to be cheesiest Strat I've ever traded for. It's raggedy-assed and beat to death. What do you want it for?" He said, "It just feels good, Ray. It feels real good." I figured he'd bring it back in a day or two, but he never did. That became his "Number One" Strat.

THE TRIPLE THREAT REVUE

FREEMAN Stevie was already great when he joined the Cobras. In fact, our drummer just sent me a

TONY MOTTRAM / RETNA U.K.

tape of some sides we cut, and his lead playing sounds fantastic—and immediately identifiable as Stevie. He maybe wasn't as strong a rhythm player as he would become, and didn't understand chord changes that well yet, but his lead playing was *there*. When he decided to leave and front his own band, which became Triple Threat Revue, it wasn't surprising. He was ready, and it was obvious to all of us that he had some sort of destiny.

ANGELA STREHLI I was doing "Texas Flood" for years. And when he decided to start a group, to become a frontman, he knew that he really should be singing. And he came to me, said that he always liked "Texas Flood," and asked if I could teach him the words, which I did. He needed some encouragement to sing; he was still a little scared. But he took the song and made it so associated with him that I quit doing it, because, after a while, everyone thought I was imitating him.

WC CLARK I was working at McMorris Ford as a mechanic, and Stevie kept coming by and telling me that he'd decided to put a band together and that he needed me to play bass. I wasn't looking for a gig, because I was getting a steady paycheck and relaxing for a change, but he kept pestering me. I had seen him around a lot, and I knew how unique he was—how clean a tone he had, how nasty and lowdown he could be, how he could play licks exactly like Chuck Berry, Albert King and B.B. King. I knew he was for real, that he was a seeker, a warrior. And that's why I not only agreed to join his band, but to play bass for him, even though I had given up the instrument to focus on guitar. I really had no interest in playing bass again, but Stevie had such a fire, and I was so impressed by how much he had already improved, that I wanted to see where he could take it. So I joined what became the Triple Threat Review.

DR. JOHN My friend Doc Pomus [*composer of such R&B classics as "This Magic Moment" and "Save the Last Dance for Me"*] kept telling me about this Texas guitar player I had to come to see at the Lone Star Cafe in Manhattan. Stevie was still playing with Lou Ann [*Barton*] and he was a hell of a good guitar player, but wasn't really special yet. He was just playing in a Houston style à la Pat Hare, Wayne Bennett and Albert Collins. A year or so later, I saw him again and noticed how much this kid had blossomed. He had gotten this whole Albert King bending thing down stone cold and his playing had just taken off. I thought anyone who improved so much so fast had something going on.

LAYTON I started playing with Stevie right after WC Clark left the band in '78. The band was no longer a "triple threat," so Stevie changed the name to Double Trouble, after the Otis Rush song. The next fall we got booked to play at the San Francisco Blues Festival. I helped book all these gigs around that, and none of them paid more than 200 bucks. We had only enough money to buy gas for the van and loaves of bread and bologna. We couldn't afford to eat a square meal, but it was a lot of fun. We played the Festival, and we did a live radio broadcast on KFAG, in Palo Alto, where we opened up for Robert Cray, who was starting to have a big name on the circuit out there. We became good friends with him, and we started to make a name for ourselves, get a little buzz, because anyone who saw Stevie wondered who the hell he was. About a year later, Lou Ann left and we became just a trio with me and Jackie Newhouse playing behind Stevie.

SHANNON In December 1980, I was living in Houston and went to see Double Trouble when they were in town; it was like a revelation. I said, "That's where I belong, right there." He called me up to jam, and soon after asked me if I wanted to join. His guitar playing had come a long way, and he had crossed the gap from straight blues, incorporating some rock and roll, some Hendrix. He was a little scared to step out of the blues, and I really encouraged him. He got some shit from the blues purists for that, but who cares? Being a purist is like being a religious fundamentalist. It's really limiting, and if you can't see beyond the little circle you draw around yourself, how are you gonna move out of it? And anyhow, he never, ever abandoned the blues; he just advanced it, took it to another level.

DR. JOHN Stevie started really blowing me away one night when we was hanging at his pad. He put on some trippy, difficult Hendrix album and started playing along with it, which impressed me. Then he started playing off it, getting down, improvising, and I thought, Man, this kid is jamming with Jimi Hendrix. That's when I saw something real unique in what he was going for, and realized that this guy was something altogether different.

BONNIE RAITT Just when you thought there wasn't any other way to make this stuff your own, he came along and blew that theory to bits. Soul is an overused word, but the fire and passion with which he invested everything he touched was just astounding, as was the way in

Onstage in New York City, June 1986. (from left) Jimmie Vaughan, Stevie Ray, Layton and Shannon

GARY GERSHOFF / RETNA LTD.

which he synthesized his influences and turned them into something so fiercely personal. I was amazed from the first time I saw him, but I had already heard all about him from guys like Albert Collins and Buddy Guy, who kept running into him and being blown away.

LAYTON Stevie never failed to impress, and that finally started to pay off in a tangible way in late '81. First, our manager somehow got a video of a show to Mick Jagger, and the next thing we knew we were playing a private party for the Rolling Stones in New York. That was a gas. Then Lou Ann Barton had a solo record coming out on a major label and we played at the big release party at the Continental Club. [*Veteran A&R man and producer*] Jerry Wexler, who had signed her, was there, and he really liked us and called up his friend, Claude Nobs, at the Montreux Jazz Festival and got us booked there. We were supposedly the first unsigned band to ever play it, and lots of good things happened as a result.

David Bowie was in the audience and he was blown away by Stevie, called him the best urban blues player he'd ever heard. He came back to the hotel and we all hung out in the bar with him for an hour. He told Stevie that he was going to be doing a bluesy record and asked him if he'd like to be on it. Stevie said, "Sure, give me a call." Meanwhile, the next night we booked ourselves into that same bar. We played all night, and Jackson Browne and his whole band came and sat in with us. We jammed until seven A.M., and then Jackson said he had a pre-production studio in L.A., Down Town, and that any time we wanted to come record some tracks free of charge, we were welcome.

In Austin, 1989

ALAN MESSER

Texas Flood

LAYTON I don't think Jackson expected us to take him up on his offer, but Stevie called him in the fall, and he agreed to give us 72 hours of free time over Thanksgiving weekend '82. We went up there, just hoping that maybe we were making a demo that would actually be listened to by a real record company. It turned out that, without knowing it, we were recording our debut album, *Texas Flood*. We just rolled in. The guys working there were mildly annoyed because it was Thanksgiving weekend, and we were like, "Hey, uh, you guys got any tape?" They gave us some used stuff; we actually recorded over some of Jackson's demos for *Lawyers in Love*.

SHANNON Down Town was really just a big warehouse with concrete floors and some rugs thrown down. We found a little corner, set up in a circle looking at and listening to each other and played like a live band. We didn't really do anything the first day, then we cut two songs the second day and eight the third. The last tune we cut was "Texas Flood," right before our time ran out.

LAYTON We stayed in L.A. and played a few dates, and one night at three in the morning the phone rang in our apartment, and this guy with an English accent asked for Stevie. I said he was sleeping and asked who it was. "It's David Bowie," he said, "and I'd like to speak to him if possible." I got Stevie up and Bowie asked him if he wanted to come to New York and cut some tracks for his new record.

SHANNON Stevie went and did it and enjoyed it, and said Bowie was a real gentleman. The feelings were obviously mutual because he asked Stevie to join his band for a world tour. Stevie finally agreed because he was getting a lot of pressure from a lot of people. Stevie was going to do it for a year, take the money and pay us to keep the band together. Then he asked Bowie if we could open some dates, and that was supposed to happen, then fell through. And then Stevie was told that he couldn't mention his own band or music in interviews, and that was it. He quit the night before the tour was supposed to start. He just couldn't do it because it wasn't what he loved playing. He liked David and his music, but it wasn't where he was headed and Stevie could not do what he didn't love.

LAYTON I wasn't surprised when Stevie quit, but I sure was happy. I couldn't believe that just when we seemed to have all this momentum, Stevie was going to be gone for at least a year, maybe more. We had worked so hard to get to that point, where it seemed like something was going to happen, that I just figured that, somehow, the whole thing would not come to pass. Then, sure enough, we found out that John Hammond really liked our tape, and was pushing to get us signed by Columbia. All of a sudden, we had a deal with Epic and they were going to release *Texas Flood*. And we got more attention because people wanted to know who this unknown guy who told David Bowie to take a hike was. And his playing on *Let's Dance* got people's attention, too.

ERIC CLAPTON Stevie was one of three or four artists who I heard and had to know who it was, right then. I was driving and "Let's Dance" came on the radio. I stopped my car and said, "I have to know who this

> **"He seemed to be an open channel. The music just poured through him, and it never dried up."** —Eric Clapton

The Vaughan brothers onstage in New York City, June 26, 1986

guitar player is today. Not tomorrow, but today."

SHANNON *Texas Flood* came out and we started touring behind it. We could slowly feel things changing, the crowds slowly getting bigger and bigger. Then we got rid of the milk truck we had been driving around in and got a bus. It was a really shitty bus, but we were in heaven riding around in it.

LAYTON We toured the whole country, playing every night, selling out 500-seat clubs, with 200 people standing outside trying to get in. And all of a sudden, "Pride and Joy" was being played on MTV, and it was just unreal.

DICKEY BETTS When I heard "Pride and Joy" on the radio, I said "Hallelujah!" Stevie Ray Vaughan single-handedly brought guitar- and blues-oriented music back to the marketplace. He was just so good and strong that he would not be denied.

Couldn't Stand the Weather / Soul to Soul

LAYTON We went to New York to record our second album and it was a kick, because we were staying at the Mayflower Hotel and recording at the Power Station, produced by John Hammond, who had discovered everyone from Charlie Christian to Bruce Springsteen and Bob Dylan. And we had a real budget to work with for the first time. We were all doing our fair share of drugs and partying, but it wasn't hurting us yet. We were pretty good at all of it about that time.

SRV We ran into Clapton on a tour of Australia. He was leaving the hotel and I went out to talk to him, hangover and all. He was sober, of course, and really calm while I sat there downing two or three shots of Crown Royal. And he just sort of looked at me wisely and said, "Well, sometimes you have to go through that, don'tcha?" If I had been ready to stop, he would have gone on to the next part—but he understood that I wasn't.

Another time we were doing a show with Albert King, and he walked backstage and said, "We gonna have a little heart to heart. I been watching you wrestle with the bottle three, four times already. I tell you what, man: I like to drink a little bit when I'm home. But the gig ain't no time to get high." He was trying to tell me to take care of business, give myself a break, but I did my usual deal of trying to act like I had it all together: "Hey, ain't nuthin' wrong, man, I'm leading the life," and all that bullshit.

SHANNON By the time we got to recording *Soul to Soul* in '85, it was getting pretty bad. We were paying for the studio time and spending hours upon hours playing ping pong waiting for our cocaine to arrive before we'd play. I think *Soul to Soul* is a good record but you can kind of tell that we're a little out of sorts.

REESE WYNANS When they were recording *Soul to Soul*, Stevie called and said they wanted me to come add some keyboards. They wanted me to play acoustic piano on "Look at Little Sister," but it didn't really work because they had such a strange setup. The studio was set up like a live performance, with an entire P.A. and all the amps and mics running through it. It was screaming loud and you could not hear a piano, so I suggested that we try a Hammond organ, where I could isolate the cabinet. We played "Change It" and the instrumentals, and it went great. We ended up recording until seven in the morning and they asked me to come back the next night. The guys told me they were glad I came over, because they had been having a hard time getting the project off the ground. Then Stevie asked me if I wanted to join the band.

LAYTON We were in a bit of a drug and alcohol frenzy by then, and when you go into the studio you have to confront what you really sound like. You can't just walk off the stage and have it over and done with; you're under a microscope. *Soul to Soul* came out well, but it was very difficult to make, and I think that had a lot to do with asking Reese to join. It was like, "We need some help here," somebody to help carry everything. We had actually added another guitarist, Derek O'Brien, who's just wonderful, for a few shows, but our manager felt that took the spotlight away from Stevie. And a lot of people were urging us to keep the trio thing, but we really needed a new perspective. We had been on an endless three-year tour punctuated by time in the studio, and we were getting burnt.

But Stevie was continuing to stretch out, trying different tones and weird stuff. We used to call him "Modern Man" because he loved to fool around with electronics, take things apart and put them back together, and he loved to just try crazy stuff. Like on "Ain't Gone 'n' Give Up On Love," Stevie took a six-string bass and put paper matches under the bridge saddle to muffle the sound—and that's what you hear on the little strum on the downbeat. We would get crazy ideas after we had been up too long and our minds were racing. Suddenly, you go, "I wonder what I would get if I put a half-cut Coke can under my bass drum pedal." And sometimes those things would actually work.

ANDREA LAUBACH / RETNA LTD.

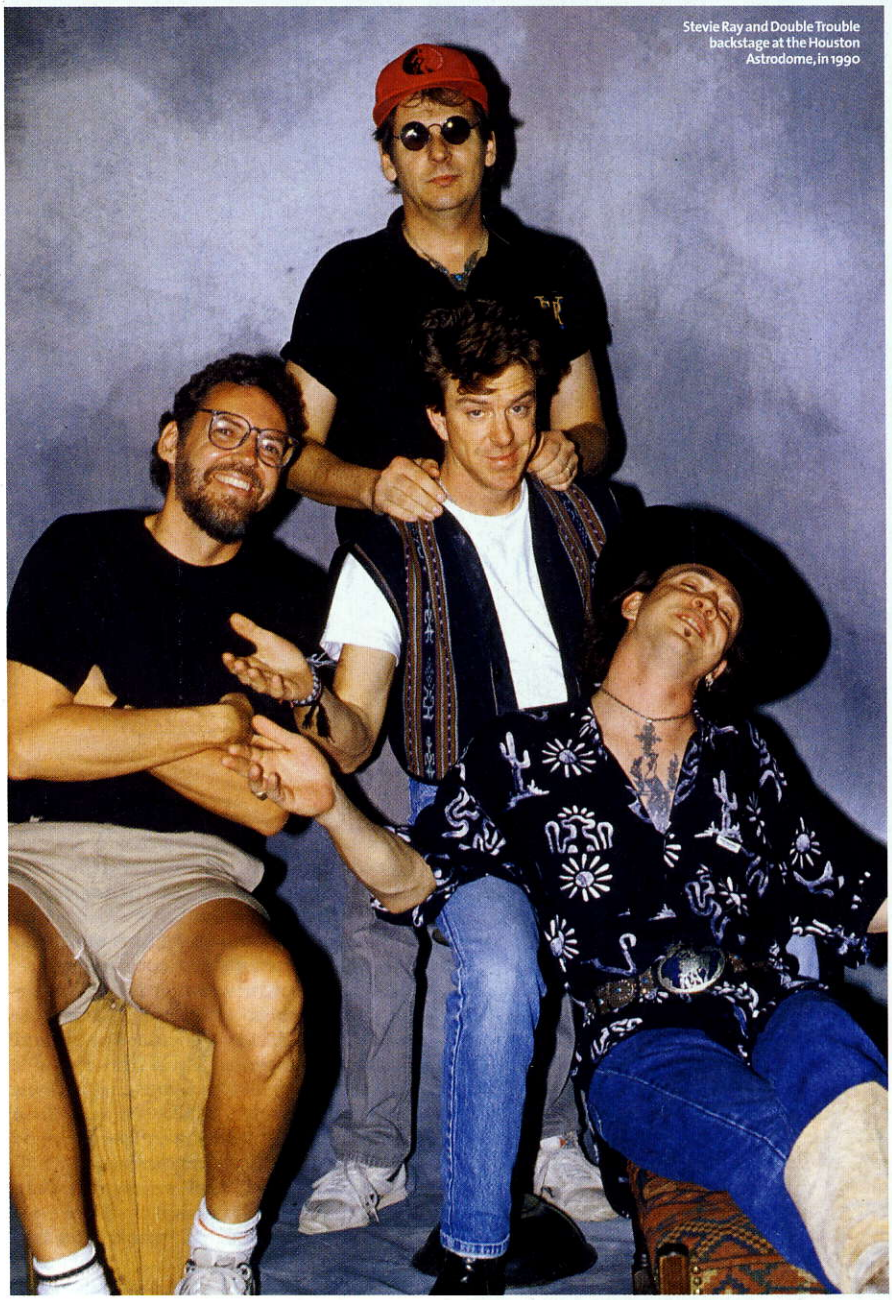
WYNANS Business-wise, I was just shocked by what was going on with them—or not going on. They were so successful as a band, I assumed their business was in order. But they didn't even know how much money they had. And the drugging was getting so bad that I was really scared for the guys' health. Stevie was just so worn down, he obviously needed a rest, but it's hard to stop working when you find out you're in big debt. So we stayed out there and got worse and worse, and probably reached sort of a low point at some of the shows we were recording for *Live Alive*.

FREEMAN I was at the gigs they recorded at the Austin Opera House [*July 17 & 18, 1986*]. I hadn't seen them in a while, and I really was disturbed by what I saw. I thought, This is a musical mess, because they would go into these chaotic jams with no control. I didn't know what exactly was going on, but I was concerned.

SHANNON I remember sitting backstage at the Opera House and saying to our manager, Alex Hodges, "Stevie and I are headed for a brick wall." I saw it coming, but neither of us could stop—and we tried. Stevie knew he was in trouble, too, because we were really getting pathetic.

SRV I had been trying to pull myself up by the bootstraps, but they were broken. I would wake up and guzzle something, just to get rid of the pain I was feeling. Whiskey, beer, vodka, whatever was handy. It got to the point where if I'd try to say "Hi" to somebody, I would just fall apart crying. It was like...solid doom.

WYNANS Stevie and Tommy were just completely out of control when we did those Opera House shows, and it was getting scary. The first year I was in the band, I saw people who were abusing substances, but also were on top of it musically. But that started to change. Things were getting illogical and crazy, and Stevie would sometimes play himself into corners and not know how the hell he was going to get out.



Stevie Ray and Double Trouble backstage at the Houston Astrodome, in 1990

MARC MORRISON / RETNA LTD.

SRV God, I wasn't in very good shape when we recorded that. At the time, I didn't realize how bad a shape I was in. There were more fix-it jobs done on the album than I would have liked. There were some good nights and some good gigs, but it was more haphazard than we would have liked. Some of the gigs were okay, but some of them sound like they were the work of half-dead people. Of course, my thinking was, Boy, doesn't that sound good? And there were some great notes that came out, but I just wasn't in control; nobody was. We were all exhausted.

LAYTON It really had gotten silly. We were just trudging along, wondering if we would make it until the afternoon. It was like being in the middle of the desert, wondering if the next step would be the one where we just fell over and died.

SHANNON Stevie and I always had adjoining rooms on the road, and we'd leave the door between us open so it was like one big room. We went on a European tour, and were at a hotel in Germany. I was lying on my bed, sick as a dog, and I could see Stevie rolling around his bed mumbling shit, and just sticking his head over and vomiting blood all over the floor, too weak to get up and walk to the bathroom. There wasn't much I could to do to help him because I was so sick myself, but I went over. He was gray, so I called an ambulance and they came and got him.

LAYTON There were all these guys in white trench coats yelling in German and sticking I.V.s into Stevie; it was really scary. He went to the hospital and then we went to Zurich, Switzerland, and performed the next night, but Stevie sounded weak, both as a player and a person. I called our manager and said, "We have to do something." We were on our way to England, so I suggested that we call Dr. Bloom, who had helped Pete Townshend and Eric Clapton in similar situations. Stevie went there for a few days of rest, after which we did two shows in London. Before the second night encore, when we were walking back to the stage, Stevie walked onto this goofy gangplank at the back corner of the stage and fell off it. That was the straw that broke the camel's back, and he just said, "I'm too tired, I need rest and I need change." So we cancelled the rest of the tour and he went to a rehab clinic in Atlanta. It was a relief, really. I remember thinking, The whirlwind has finally stopped. And we're alive.

WYNANS Something had to give, and what gave was Stevie. He just had a breakdown, and it was a huge relief knowing that he was going to get some help.

SHANNON Stevie went to the Charter Lane treatment center in Atlanta and I went into one in Austin. We were both there 28 days, and that was just the beginning of the day-to-day process.

JIMMIE VAUGHAN It didn't even occur to me that Stevie would really go clean. I figured that he'd just do his 30 days to get everyone off his back, then go back to it. But he was serious, and dedicated, and he showed the way for me, and a lot of other people.

RAITT I was playing in Atlanta at the end of his rehab stay, and he came to see me. I invited him onstage, as we would always do for one another. I found out later that he was really nervous because it was his first time playing sober. But he played great, and there went my last excuse for not getting sober.

SRV The music has become really important [*since I've become sober*]. Music is a way to reach out and hold on to one another in a really healthy way. It's helped me to open up more and take a chance on loving people. It's a whole new world for me. More so than ever, if I don't play the best I possibly can, and really try to play better than I think I can, then I've wasted it. Because I'm playing on borrowed time. Left to my own devices, I would have killed myself. But for some reason I'm not dead.

In Step

LAYTON It was sort of a cruel irony that *Live Alive* came out right when Tommy and Stevie got out of treatment. One of the first times we got together again was to make a video for "Superstition." So everyone was clearheaded and healthy, and we were trying to play along to this dope- and booze-laden tune. It was like, "God, can't we cut this song again?" It was a weird contrast, but it was a great feeling to have everyone really into it again, ready to put the whole thing back together. It was the start of something real good.

WYNANS Stevie was nervous about playing his first sober shows, but we hit the stage and it was just magical. Within three nights, he completely hit his stride and was playing better than any of us had ever heard him. He was playing the way he always wanted to and was just ecstatic. Every song was exciting, and ideas were constantly popping up.

CLAPTON He seemed to be an open channel. The music just poured through him, and it never dried up.

BRAMHALL Stevie and I got together to write songs for his new album, what became *In Step*, and did what we always did: spend a few days just hanging out talking and catching up, which would point us in the direction we were going to head. We had both sobered up within four months, and we knew that was something we had to deal with. It was important for us to talk about and write about our experiences with addiction. We wanted to directly confront the issues that surrounded our drug and alcohol days, which led to songs like "Wall of Denial" and "Tightrope."

SRV I was afraid that I'd turn people off, but somewhere along the way that quit mattering. It seems real important to me to write about that stuff. I had spent so long with this image of, "I'm cooler than so and so because I get higher than he does." And it's just not true.

LAYTON We went to Memphis to start recording *In Step* in the fall of '88, and it was very tedious at first. There was some trepidation because we knew it was our proving ground, that we had to show that we could make good records without anyone being high. I know Stevie felt the doubt. I think it ended up producing the tightest band performances of our career, but we really worked at it.

SHANNON Stevie would do anything to get new, different or better sounds, trying to wire different amps together or whatever, and he seemed to spend a lot of time messing with stuff on *In Step*. But his actual playing just flowed once he got down to it.

JIM GAINES Stevie told me he had an instrumental called "Riviera Paradise" he wanted to try, and I said that I only had nine minutes of tape left. He said, "Don't worry. It's only four minutes long." We dimmed the lights and they started playing this gorgeous song, which went on to six minutes, seven minutes, seven and a half... The song is absolutely incredible, totally inspired, dripping with emotion—and here we were, about to run out of tape. I was jumping up and down, waving my arms, but everyone was so wrapped up in their playing that no one was paying me any mind. I finally got Chris' attention and emphatically gave him the cut sign. He started trying to flag down Stevie, but he was hunched over his guitar with his head bent down. Finally, he looked up, and they brought the song down just in time. It ended and, a few seconds later, the tape finished and the studio was silent except for the sound of the empty reel spinning around. We cut the song a few more times, but it sounded like Muzak compared to that first, magical version.

SHANNON We finished the record and were really happy with it. Then we went back on the road, and it was a whole new world. The music was great, we had a great organization, a great road manager, Skip Rickert, a great crew. We were all just really happy, and Stevie was so great, it was just frightening. I never got used to playing with Stevie. I never took it for granted. It was like, "Okay, where the hell is he going tonight because I got to follow." Stevie never said, "Now play this." He just played and we followed, and it only got more and more exciting.

LAYTON We toured through the winter of '90, then took a break for Stevie to go record *Family Style* with Jimmie.

With Shannon at the Greek Theater, Berkeley, California, October 11, 1985

CLAYTON CALL / RETNA LTD.

SHANNON Stevie really enjoyed cutting *Family Style* and spending all that time with his brother. He said it was like coming home. After they did that he took a little vacation and then we got back together to finish some touring. We ended the summer tour with the two shows at Alpine Valley, outside Chicago. It involved playing with Clapton and Robert Cray, and Jimmie and Buddy Guy came up to be special guests. It was just great fun, really exciting. Sort of the culmination of all the good times we'd been having for the last year or two. And, as good as we had been playing, those two shows were just unreal.

JIMMIE VAUGHAN Stevie just *smoked*. It was one of those gigs where you see someone play and you can't believe what you're hearing. They're just wailing and happy and making it happen, raising it another notch. That's what it was like that night at Alpine Valley. Stevie was unreal. He was just on another plane, and we all knew it.

RAITT The first night at Alpine Valley I was there just to watch, and it was just great to see everyone. I really think that Stevie was perhaps the greatest guitarist ever, and he just showed it that night.

BUDDY GUY Man, first of all, Stevie was one of the best ever. Period. But those nights, he was just something else. And I remember standing with him on the side of the stage while Eric was playing, and he was sort of playing air guitar, fingering along with what Eric played. After he died, for some reason I kept thinking of that, him standing there playing phantom notes.

> "CHRIS CAME INTO MY ROOM. I SAID, 'STEVIE'S DEAD,' AND HE JUST LOST IT TOO."
> —TOMMY SHANNON

SHANNON The first night I stuck around for the jam at the end, but the second night I wanted to get back to Chicago, so I took a helicopter back with Reese. I went to sleep and got woken up by a phone call from our tour manager at 6:30 A.M. He said that we had to have a meeting in my room right away. I said, "It's 6:30 in the morning, no time for a meeting. What the hell is going on?" And he said, "It's very important." I started feeling very uneasy, and a few minutes later I got a call from our manager, Alex Hodges, saying that one of the helicopters had gone down and Stevie was on it, and there were no survivors. In the blink of an eye my life was taken away from me. I was sitting on the bed, crying, and Chris came into my room, asking what was going on. I said, "Stevie's dead," and he just lost it too.

LAYTON I was in denial, didn't believe it at all, so I called security and I forced them to let me into Stevie's room. I really thought he'd be there sleeping, but when they opened the door, the bed was still made and I just realized, "My God, it's true."

SHANNON Stevie's coat was laid out on the bed and, oddly, the clock radio was playing that Eagles song that goes, "And I may never see you again." It was playing real softly, but it might as well have been a bullhorn into my ear. Then we all went back to my room, and Jimmie was there, and we were all a wreck, sobbing and dazed. It was the most horrible moment in my life. I'll never have anything hurt that bad again, ever.

LAYTON I felt like a car had fallen on me or something. I felt like a baby, just completely helpless. Then we remembered that the news reports said that Stevie *and his band* were killed, and I realized that I had to get a hold of my family and tell them that I was still alive. So we spent a bunch of time calling our families, and just sort of going on autopilot. Because if I started thinking about it, I wouldn't be able to function.

DR. JOHN I played at his funeral which was really gut-wrenching. I played every hymn I knew, then Stevie Wonder came up and said to me, "*Ava Maria* in G," and I don't know it in any key. So I just stopped and let him sing a cappella, and once I wasn't playing, I got really aware. "Man, I'm with his coffin," and went into that zone, where it was all hitting me like gangbusters. Being in that little church and realizing that Stevie's feet were just a few feet away from me was so damn heavy I could hardly breathe.

FREEMAN You know, since Stevie died, he's been elevated to sainthood. It sounds strange, but in a weird way I think it diminishes him, because Stevie wasn't a saint. He was a person, and he had faults, but he was sweet and funny and a wonderful guy to hang with in addition to being an exceptional talent.

JIMMIE VAUGHAN The world misses his music, but I miss my brother. **BL**

outstanding total guitar music

KILLER NEW DISCS

JAY JESSE JOHNSON: *"Play That Damn Guitar"* (GYR050)
Mega-Awesome 3rd solo disc from this amazing blues/rock axeripper featuring 11 tracks (58 m.) of Classic, bad-ass, killer, bluesy heavy guitar power trio riffage that will rock your world. Highly recommended to fans of Hendrix, Trower & Frank Marino.

TONY SPINNER: *"Rollin' & Tumblin'"* (GYR051)
Outstanding new studio disc from this awesome blues/rock axeslinger from Arkansas. Features 14 tracks (74m.) of top-shelf, world-class, soul-powered, earthy, bluesy heavy guitar grooves. Fans of Rory Gallagher, Johnny Winter, SRV & Trower take note.

ONESKO BOGERT CEO PROJECT: *"Cream Jam"* (GYR053)
Excellent "tribute" to CREAM featuring Mike Onesko (Blindside Blues Band) on Guitar, Bass Guitar Legend Tim Bogert (BBA) & Emery Ceo on Drums. Recorded Live without a net. Awesome, retro-70s bluesy heavy guitar power trio riffage @ it's best.

::CHECK OUT THESE OTHER AWESOME HEAVY GUITAR MONSTERS::

CRAIG ERICKSON PROJECT: *"Shine"* (GYR003)
Superb 5th disc by this incredible, gifted blues/rock axeslinger. 13 tracks (69 m.) of top-shelf, soulful, bluesy heavy guitar riffage. Featuring Special Guests - Glenn Hughes & Rob Lamothe (Riverdogs) on vocals. A classic, bluesy heavy guitar rocker.

BUDDAHEADS: *"Howlin' At The Moon"* (GYR010)
Brilliant blues/rock power trio featuring the outstanding talents of Alan Mirikitani on Guitar & Vocals. Featuring 16 tracks (78m.) of awesome, world-class, blues/rock heavy guitar power trio joy. Highly recommended to fans of SRV, Trower and Hendrix.

LANCE LOPEZ: *"Wall Of Soul"* (GYR009)
Awesome 2nd disc by this bad-ass, Hendrix-inspired blues/rock axeripper from Dallas. Includes 12 tracks (62 m.) of killer, intense, powerful, bluesy/funky, retro-70s heavy guitar power trio grooves. Featuring Special Guests Eric Gales & Doug Pinnick (King's X).

PLANKTON: *"Self-titled"* (GYR004)
Phenomenal debut disc from this incredibly gifted instrumental dual heavy guitar band featuring Emil Fredholm and Christian Neppenstrom on guitar. Superb, deep, bluesy Hendrix-inspired *"earth blues fusion"*. A stunning heavy guitar masterpiece.

Also Available: Awesome discs by Truth, Indigenous, The Hoax, Randy Hansen, BBB, Sky High featuring Clas Yngstrom, Blindstone, Bugs Henderson, Scarlet Runner, Guitar Pete, etc.

GROOVEYARD RECORDS

Tune into our website for more info plus MP3 samples on all of these killer heavy guitar discs & more.
KEEP ON SWINGIN' THAT AXE.

www.grooveyardrecords.com

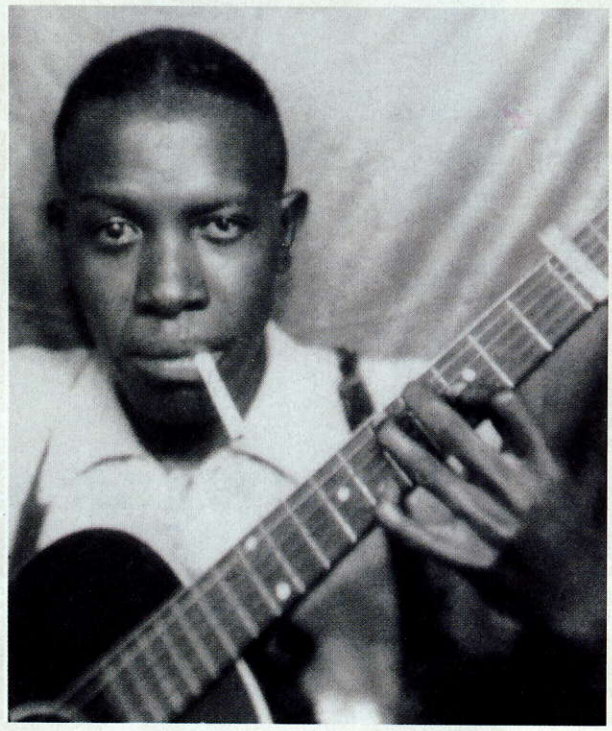
AX MUSEUM
PORTRAITS OF GUITAR HEROES

ROBERT JOHNSON

THE KING OF THE DELTA BLUES, ROBERT JOHNSON WENT DOWN TO THE CROSSROADS AND CAME BACK A LEGEND.

By KEITH WYATT

ALTHOUGH HE DIED nearly two decades before the birth of rock and roll, Robert Johnson possessed the enormous talent and sex appeal of modern rock stars, plus two factors essential to popular myth making: a very short life and a controversial death. In fact, the story of Johnson's life is more shadowy than that of any other influential blues player, based as it is on sketchy biographical information, a modest body of recordings (41 tracks, of which 12 are alternate takes) and precisely two known photographs. In the absence of substantial details, Johnson's peers fabricated a tale replete with midnight meetings at the crossroads, a deal with the devil and hellhounds that relentlessly followed the doomed guitarist's trail. Yet the legend sells him short by suggesting that his brilliance was just a musical prize in Satan's lottery. Rather, it was the result of very real human effort and an uncanny talent for selecting and integrating the musical elements that made up his artistry.



In fact, Robert Johnson was a sophisticated musician by any standard. Whatever native talents one possesses, no one gets to be that good and that consistently brilliant without a lot of hard work and critical listening. Many an aspiring blues guitarist's ego has been broken on the wheel of Johnson's brilliant playing on "Terraplane Blues," never mind the singing, composition and fresh, off-the-cuff spirit of the performance.

To the public, the name Robert Johnson may represent a ghostly embodiment of Delta mystery more than a still-vital musical inspiration. But guitarists owe it to themselves to put aside the myth, go directly to the source and prepare to be humbled.

PG 22

HISTORY AND INFLUENCES

LIKE MANY AFRICAN-AMERICAN children of the early 20th century Jim Crow south, Johnson entered into a complicated world. Born in 1911 in Hazelhurst, Mississippi, he spent his childhood moving from place to place and father to stepfather. He was raised as Robert Spencer but changed his surname while in his teens after his mother, Julia, revealed the identity of his true father, Noah Johnson.

As poor as his circumstances were, Johnson grew up in a musically rich world. The mass production of 78 rpm records—still a fairly recent innovation—meant that for the first time in history, musicians could learn from one another at a distance. As an aspiring player, Robert Johnson had a wealth of music at his fingertips and showed a gift for absorbing new material on the spot, from pianist Leroy Carr's 1928 smash, "How Long, How Long Blues" to hillbilly tunes and even polkas.

While records allowed Johnson to explore far and wide, he was also fortunate to be surrounded by musicians who could take him deeper. Guitarist Willie Brown, who lived near Johnson's teenage home of Robinsonville, Mississippi, was an established performer who occasionally worked the local juke joints with friend and prototypical Delta bluesman Charlie Patton. Brown reportedly showed Johnson his fingering and chording techniques, and the young guitarist also made a point of studying Patton, whose raw vocals, powerful guitar and legendary performing acrobatics left a strong impression of him.

© 1986 DELTA HAZE CORPORATION. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. USED BY PERMISSION.

Reprinted from GUITAR WORLD, *JANUARY 2000*

FIGURE 1

FIGURE 2

But it was another friend of Brown's, Son House, who would become Johnson's prime inspiration. Although not yet 30 himself, House was an experienced performer with recordings under his belt and a fully formed, emotionally intense playing and singing style. Johnson watched him on every possible occasion, absorbing songs, licks and attitude that would affect him for the rest of his own short life.

At the age of 19, Robert Johnson found himself at a junction in his personal and musical life. Married, and with a child on the way, he felt the mounting pressure to settle down and work on the farm. A career in music must have seemed a long shot, at best. But the sudden death of his 16-year-old wife and their baby during childbirth threw all assumptions about Johnson's future to the wind. Not long afterward, he left Robinsonville and returned to his boyhood home of Hazelhurst, looking for a new start.

What he found there was a guitar mentor—Ike Zinneman—who did for Johnson's musicianship what Son House had done for his spirit. Within the span of a single year, Johnson developed so dramatically that the legend arose of a midnight handshake with the devil. The likely truth is more prosaic—that he simply played guitar nonstop, linking up the musical fragments that for years had been loosely floating below the surface. Under Zinneman's tutelage, he tightened up his arrangements and began to maintain a logbook of lyrics and ideas. The next time Son House and Willie Brown heard Robert Johnson, the tables of inspiration had been turned.

By the time Johnson became a professional blues musician, in the early Thirties, the Depression was underway, and southern blacks were hit especially hard. Where there were paychecks, there was money to be spent on musicians, and like dozens of others Johnson took to the road in pursuit of his share. He headed for Helena, Arkansas, home to a thriving music scene, and there Johnson met and played with the cream of the Delta crop—Sonny Boy Williamson II, Robert Nighthawk, Elmore James, Howlin' Wolf, Memphis Slim and many others.

Johnson's regional reputation was growing, but to reach the next level he had to make records. An audition for a local music store owner resulted in an invitation to travel to San Antonio, Texas, where Johnson had his first recording session in November 1936. In a hotel room before a single microphone, he began laying down what would become the most famous recordings in the history of Delta blues. After three sessions held over the course of a few days, followed by two more in Dallas less than a year later, Robert Johnson's entire musical legacy was in the can.

The only "hit" to come out of these sessions was "Terraplane Blues." The record sold a few thousand copies, a respectable number by Depression-era "race record" standards. Together with his other releases—11 in total—it boosted Johnson's reputation and put some money in his pocket. It also attracted the attention of John Hammond, a New York–based Columbia Records executive with a legendary ear for talent. (Hammond is credited with "discovering"—among others—Count Basie, Billie Holiday, Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen.) Hammond was assembling the lineup for the 1938 "Spirituals to Swing" concert, a major showcase of African-American music presented in New York City's Carnegie Hall, and he wanted Johnson to appear as the finest contemporary representative of Delta blues. The word went out, but unknown to Hammond, Robert Johnson was already dead. On August 16, 1938, poisoned whiskey poured by a jealous husband had laid him down.

Style and Technique

AS WITH ANY GREAT ARTIST, the genius of Robert Johnson's work is in the totality. Others have played his guitar parts to perfection, or sung the words, or matched the vocals note for note. But it's the sum of all these parts and more that makes his records sound so alive more than 60 years after they were recorded.

As a guitarist, Johnson knocked out his contemporaries with his ability to play full, driving rhythm with a thumb pick while simultaneously picking out melodies on the high strings with his bare fingers. He didn't record many improvised solos per se; instead, he stuck to melodic phrases that functioned as part of each song's fabric. Wherever two takes of the same song exist, the versions are almost identical, the alternate takes being essentially backup copies recorded in the event the master take was damaged.

Johnson played both standard fingerstyle guitar and slide. He used standard tuning whenever he was not playing slide, although on some recordings he may have tuned the whole guitar down a half step (low to high, E♯ A♭ D♭ G♭ B♭ E♭) or up a half step (low to high, E♯ A♯ D♯ G♯ B♯ E♯), perhaps using a capo when raising the pitch. When he played slide, he used either open G tuning (low to high, D G D G B D), as on "Come On in My Kitchen" and "Cross Road Blues," or open E tuning (low to high, E B E G♯ B E), as on "Rambling on My Mind." Again, some recordings in odd keys are capoed or tuned to a higher pitch.

His rhythms were undoubtedly piano influenced. One in particular, adapted from a typical left-hand piano boogie-woogie figure (**FIGURE 1**), became the basis of so many guitar players' blues rhythm styles that it's like having the patent on dirt. The typical embellishment at the end of bar 1 shows that he was thinking a cut above his contemporaries, even when pounding out the beat. Johnson used a thumb pick and bare fingers, but this type of phrase can also be played using a "hybrid" picking approach (bass notes played with flatpick held between thumb and index finger, and high notes plucked with bare second and third fingers). Johnson used this type of rhythm pattern, with variations, on many of his songs, including "Sweet Home Chicago" and "I Believe I'll Dust My Broom."

Probably the single lick that most quickly evokes Johnson's guitar style is a figure that he used as an intro, ending and turnaround on many of his recordings (**FIGURE 2**). He played a number of variations on this phrase, adding rhythmic or melodic embellishments to customize it for a given tune. Again, a pick-and-fingers, or fingerpicking, approach is necessary.

Gear

THE TWO KNOWN PHOTOGRAPHS of Robert Johnson show him with two different round-hole, flattop six-string guitars. Undoubtedly they were strung with heavy-gauge strings (the only type available at that time), and he is shown with a thumb pick. His bottleneck (not in the photos) was probably fashioned from an actual bottle, since custom-made accessories didn't exist. No reverb, no amp, no distortion—the effects are entirely emotional.

Selected Listening

JOHNSON'S CATALOG IS SO SLIM that it fits on one CD: *The Complete Recordings*. All 29 songs and 12 alternate takes are included. **BL**

A MAN AND HIS BLUES

JIMI HENDRIX LEARNED AT HIS FEET. ERIC CLAPTON CALLS HIM "THE GREATEST LIVING GUITARIST." IN THIS INSIGHTFUL INTERVIEW, BLUES LEGEND BUDDY GUY REFLECTS ON HIS GREATEST RECORDINGS.

By ALAN DI PERNA

PG 24

BUDDY GUY'S LEGENDS club sits on a windswept Chicago street corner. It's not one of those Disney-fied, touristy blues places but a bona fide neighborhood joint with neon beer signs and walls that have been spray-painted black. The club's upstairs offices are equally down to earth: dinged-up metal desks, clutter everywhere and a battery-challenged smoke alarm that chirps constantly. No one seems to notice.

Seated at a desk that looks like it could once have belonged to an automotive repo man, Buddy is dressed in a light-blue windbreaker and matching Kangol hat. His hands cradle an old black-and-white photograph that shows Buddy with Muddy Waters and Willie Dixon at the historic Chess recording studio in Chicago. The years seem to melt away as Buddy gazes down at the image.

"Man, you can see the expression on my face," he says, beaming. "To sit there and play behind Muddy Waters—I was in heaven."

Buddy Guy is our greatest living link between the blues' storied past and its vibrant present. He has traded licks with the founding fathers of electric blues, the Sixties rock gods and today's finest young bloods. As blues guitarists go, they just don't come any better than Buddy. His utterly unique sense of phrasing seems hardwired to the emotional logic of choked-back tears. Astoundingly agile, he can make a Fender Stratocaster sing the proud exuberance of human sorrow transmuted to pure beauty.

Guy was just in his early twenties when he arrived in Chicago in 1957. At "Battles of the Blues" contests he took on hungry contemporaries like Otis Rush and Magic Sam to win a bottle of whiskey—and he didn't even drink. Guy's winning techniques were acquired from Eddie "Guitar Slim" Jones, a New Orleans bluesman who was his hero. Two decades before Jimi Hendrix, Guitar Slim played guitar behind his head, charged into the audience (courtesy of an extra-long guitar cable) and earned the title of the "performin'est" bluesman that ever was. Guy took freely from Guitar Slim and added his own new tricks—slapping his strings with a handkerchief or drumstick and beginning his sets from inside the men's room (via a lengthy cable, just like Slim). His playing was as dramatic as his stage show, mixing wild multi-fret bends, piercing attack and string-snapping intensity.

Muddy Waters saw Guy perform and win one of those blues contests and recommended him to Chess Records. The label passed at first, but after

Reprinted from GUITAR WORLD, *OCTOBER 2005*

RAYON RICHARDS

Onstage in the Seventies

Guy cut some sides for rival label Cobra, Chess signed him on, in 1960, and he recorded there for several years as a sideman, as part of a celebrated duo with singer/harpist Junior Wells, and as a featured artist in his own right.

Guy became one of the stars of the Sixties' blues scene and finished out the decade with the album *Buddy Guy & Junior Wells Play the Blues*. Featuring performances by Eric Clapton, Dr. John and the J. Geils Band, and co-produced by Clapton, the album was supposed to launch Guy and Wells into the big time. But the Sixties' blues boom was over, and Guy spent the next two decades in the wilderness.

His fortunes changed in 1991 after Clapton requested that Guy take part in his 24 Nights all-star blues guitar extravaganza at London's Royal Albert Hall. Guy's star was again rising, and he signed to Silvertone Records. He subsequently released the best-selling recording of his career, *Damn Right I've Got the Blues*, which featured cameos from Clapton, Beck, Mark Knopfler and the Memphis Horns. But perhaps the finest gem in Guy's recent output is his 2001 release, *Sweet Tea*, in which he reinvented himself in the vein of North Mississippi bluesmen. He changed gears once again in 2005 with the soul-inflected *I Got Dreams*, in which his put his distinctive stamp on tracks by legends like Wilson Pickett, Eddie Floyd and Johnny Taylor.

In matters of blues history, Buddy possesses a ready and vivid memory. He seems to feel the bitterness of each ripoff and the glory of each musical triumph as if they happened yesterday. As he reflects on some of his greatest recordings, from the late Fifties to the present day, the recollections come flooding back, infusing the hallowed grooves with the living truth they call "the blues."

"Sit and Cry (The Blues)"

DATE 1958

WHY IT COUNTS Buddy's very first single.

STUDIO Cobra Records, Chicago. "There was a little record store in front with 45s and 78s," Buddy recalls. "You walked through to some old garage in the back, and that was Cobra Records. Just a car garage, man, but that's where I was gettin' that real sound you hear on that record."

BACKSTORY Buddy left his native Louisiana and arrived in Chicago on September 25, 1957, hoping to land a contract with premiere blues label Chess Records. Initially, Chess passed, but rival label Cobra, headed by Eli Toscano, eagerly signed the new arrival to its subsidiary imprint, Artistic.

THE TRACK A slow, mournful blues meditation in G, punctuated by lachrymose sax drones and skittering piano. Buddy's unrestrained vocal style is already very much intact on this debut release, and the expressive guitar lines and clean, concise 12-bar solo ably serve as counterpoint.

PRODUCTION NOTES The song's slightly unusual chord structure audibly confounds the backing band at points, especially when they hit the bridge. Buddy makes a strong showing nonetheless.

BUDDY'S GEAR A Gibson Les Paul Goldtop, purchased on installment back in Louisiana. "The amp was either a little Gibson with two speakers in it or a Sears Roebuck," Buddy adds.

KEY PLAYER Willie Dixon (1915–1992) wrote the song and played bass on the date. This was the first of many Buddy Guy recordings that would be penned by Dixon, the blues' own Cole Porter, Irving Berlin and William Shakespeare rolled into one. Dixon's songs were recorded by Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, the Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin and many others. Buddy still vividly remembers his first meeting with Willie, an imposingly large man who dwarfed the big upright bass that was his signature instrument:

"Willie Dixon come and got me and told me he was gonna take me to dinner. I figured, I just got here from Louisiana; I don't have an education; now's my time to just be cool—watch and learn. So we walks into this barbecue joint and Willie orders a whole fuckin' chicken. I'm figurin' we gon' take a fork and knife, carve up the chicken, and me and him would eat it. But when the chicken come out, he picks it up, breaks it in half with his bare hands and start to eat the whole fuckin' thing himself. He looks at me like, What you gon' have?"

POSTSCRIPT Shortly after this session, Buddy's Les Paul was stolen from the bandstand at a club where he was playing. Cobra Records didn't last much longer either. "I think Eli Toscano got killed or drowned or something," Buddy says. "I heard a lot of different stories about that."

> **"Cobra Records was just a car garage, man, but that's where I was gettin' that real sound you hear on that record."**
>
> —On recording "Sit and Cry (The Blues)"

Guy in the Sixties

"The First Time I Met the Blues"

DATE Recorded March 6, 1960

WHY IT COUNTS Buddy's first single for Chess; one of the greatest and most influential blues recordings of all time; beloved by Jimmy Page and many others

STUDIO Chess Records, 2120 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago; now a historic landmark

BACKSTORY After two singles on Artistic, Buddy easily made the jump to Chess, where he went on to cut a series of singles and served as a session guitarist to immortals like Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf. "You'd get $30 for making a session," Buddy recalls. "And that was the best money you could make in Chicago. Working in clubs you'd only make, four, five or six dollars a night. Even Muddy was only making $12."

Buddy's producers and bosses at his new label were the brothers Phil and Leonard Chess. Polish immigrants and former liquor salesmen, the Chess brothers built the Chess and Checker labels into a blues empire, releasing classic discs by Muddy, Wolf, Little Walter, Sonny Boy Williamson, Elmore James and Jimmy Rogers, not to mention seminal early rock and roll sides by Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley. Buddy didn't always see eye to eye with the Chess brothers, but the entrepreneurial siblings nonetheless produced some of his finest recordings and played an important role in developing many of his key stylistic trademarks.

THE TRACK A chilling blues allegory, "The First Time I Met the Blues" recounts a fateful crossroads encounter with the blues itself, here personified as an ominous manifestation of all life's sufferings. Buddy's plaintive vocal is underscored by some of the most stinging guitar playing ever committed to tape: frenzied bursts of pent-up emotion delivered with a razor-thin tone that cuts like a suicide's arterial slash.

PRODUCTION NOTES Speaking of razor blades, the Chess brothers were by no means averse to slicing a master tape to suit length requirements or other commercial exigencies. Deft tape editing produced the eerily powerful opening to "The First Time I Met the Blues." There is no instrumental prelude of any sort. We're plunged straight into Buddy's agonized vocal, immersed in the narrative before we know what's hit us. "There originally was an intro," Buddy reveals. "I could never start in singing like I did on that track without

OPPOSITE PAGE: TOM COPI/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES; THIS PAGE: MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

an intro. I had to get into it first. But I had a bad habit back then: some of my intros were too long. So they'd cut 'em out."

The Chess siblings also suggested the keening, high-pitched vocal register Buddy employs on the track and which would become a signature element of his singing style. "Little Brother Montgomery [*who wrote the song*] had made a hit of 'The First Time I Met the Blues' [*in 1936*]," Buddy remembers. "The Chess brothers told me I could do the song in a higher voice. They were kind of trying to lead me in the direction of B.B. King. Ain't but one of them. But they want me to sing it kind of high. It's one of the most talked-about songs I ever did for Chess."

BUDDY'S GEAR This is perhaps the earliest track to feature Buddy's Sunburst 1957 Fender Stratocaster, one of the most sacred artifacts in all of blues history. The guitar was purchased—just barely—shortly after the theft of Buddy's Les Paul in '58.

"I had to get down on my knees and beg this lady at this famous blues club called Theresa's Lounge at 48th and Indiana," he remembers. "And she finally loaned me the money for that Strat. I think it was $149 or $150, with case, strap and everything."

Buddy chose a Stratocaster because it was the instrument of choice for his ax hero, Guitar Slim, whose highly theatrical stage performances inspired the style of showmanship that Buddy would later pass on to Jimi Hendrix. Buddy's much-battered '57 Strat was his main guitar until 1976, when it too was stolen. Before then, it was most often mated with a '59 Fender Bassman amp. These two pieces of gear are very much *the* sound of early Buddy Guy recordings. Buddy quickly got into the habit of cranking the Bassman to the max and using the Strat's volume and tone controls to achieve the rich tonal variations heard in his work.

"When I would record with Muddy and them, we used to drink wine, beer and whiskey and set it on the amp. So all the control knobs on my amp had frozen with dirt, booze, cigarette butts and all that. But that was okay, 'cause I didn't need to move them anymore. All I had that worked on that amplifier was the on-and-off switch."

KEY PLAYERS "The First Time I Met the Blues" was the first of many Buddy Guy sessions to feature the redoubtable Jack Meyers on electric bass, still a relatively new instrument when the record was made. (The first commercially available electric bass, the Fender Precision, was introduced in 1951.) "When the Fender bass first came along, I remember seeing this kid Jack Meyers play it with [*guitarist*] Earl Hooker's band," Buddy recounts. "Hooker actually owned the bass, so the only time that boy could play, he had to work with Earl Hooker. But I found out that Willie Dixon had a Fender bass that he'd pawned at a place on 47th and State. So I told that boy, 'If you wanna play with me, I'll go get that Fender out of pawn from Dixon.' And I gave it to Jack, 'cause he was a good little bass player."

On Buddy's records, Meyer was often paired with ace Chess session drummer Fred Below (pronounced *BEE-low*), who here pounds the toms like some lost soul condemned to play the strip clubs of Hell for all eternity. Apparently, Below was a bit of a cutup in the studio. "They finally had to build a pen around him, like a cardboard box," Buddy recalls, "so he couldn't mess with anybody."

At the Avalon Ballroom, San Francisco, July 14, 1968

BARON WOLMAN / RETNA LTD.

"My Home Is in the Delta" by Muddy Waters

DATE Recorded in September, 1963

WHY IT COUNTS Historic pairing of Buddy Guy with blues icon Muddy Waters on a track that marks Muddy's return to his Mississippi Delta folk blues roots

STUDIO Chess Records, 2120 S. Michigan Ave.

BACKSTORY The mid-Sixties folk boom created an enthusiastic interest in rural blues among predominantly white college youths. Eager to reach this new audience, the Chess brothers decided to "reposition" Muddy Waters—then the quintessential sharp-dressed, smooth-talking urban bluesman—as a humble Delta sharecropper. Thus, the classic *Muddy Waters Folk Singer* album was born.

"Chess heard about the college kids buying folk music," Buddy recalls, "so they called Muddy in and they wanted to rush one of those records out on him. They gave him a train ticket and told him to go down South and find some of those older guys who play that kind of stuff. And Muddy said, 'Set the fuckin' session up for tomorrow. I got it.' They thought Muddy was gonna call some old-time guy and put him on a train. When Leonard Chess came in that morning and saw me sitting there, that guy called me a 'motherfucker' so many times, I almost cried and left the studio. But Muddy told him, 'Shut the fuck up and listen.' After we got done playing, they stood there with their mouths wide open.

All they could say to me was, 'Motherfucker, how'd you know that?' "

THE TRACK With Clifton James on the drum kit, this is hardly authentic Delta folk blues. But Waters' composition receives an eloquently understated acoustic reading, sensitively supported by Willie Dixon's supple stand-up bass. With Muddy playing mostly single-note leads and embellishments on slide, Buddy is essentially the main guitarist on the track. He proves a confident and resourceful interpreter of the acoustic blues idiom. Check that graceful riff—somewhat in the manner of Robert Junior Lockwood—on the V chord of the second verse. As Buddy himself says, "I know how to back Muddy up on that shit, man."

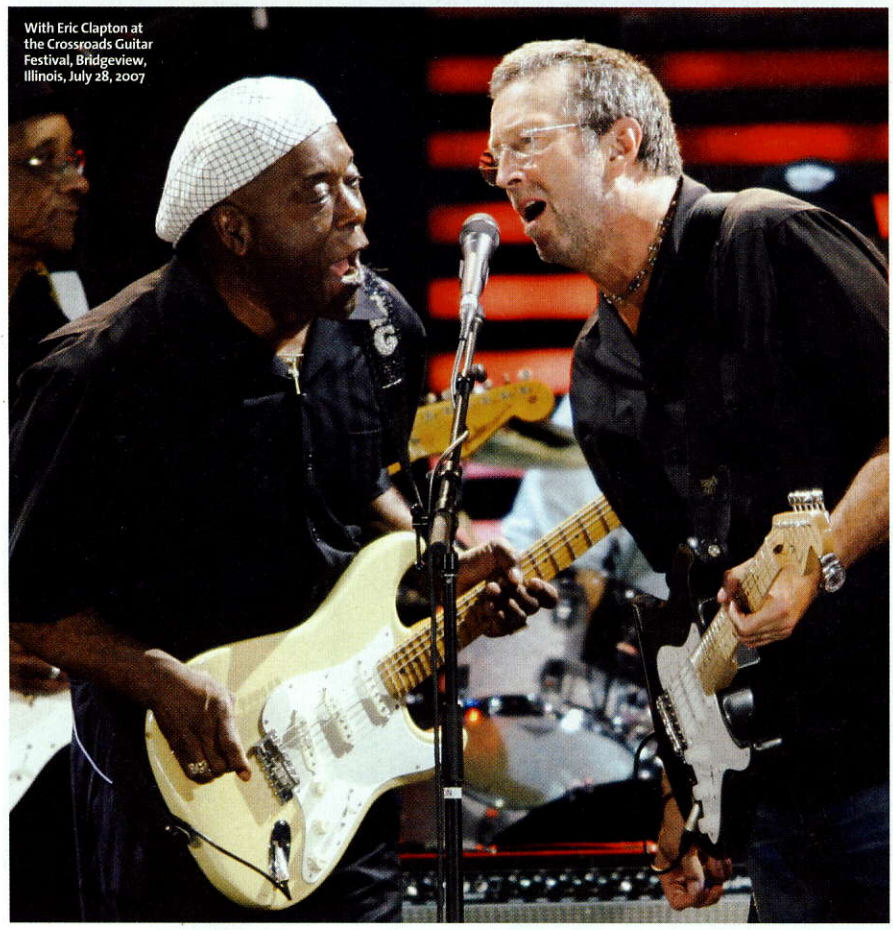
PRODUCTION NOTES Session photos depict a very minimal recording setup, with just one mic for Waters, Guy and Dixon. As a result, the track has a very open, ambient feel—the sound of that hallowed room at 2120 S. Michigan Avenue.

BUDDY'S GEAR At the time of this recording, Buddy didn't even own an acoustic guitar. Muddy Waters lent him one of his archtops for the date.

KEY PLAYER McKinley Morganfield, a.k.a. Muddy Waters (1915–1983), really did grow up in rural Mississippi. He worked on a plantation and was recorded by folklorist Alan Lomax before he traveled north in 1943 and became the principal architect and undisputed king of Chicago blues. Muddy had a huge influence on the Rolling Stones, who took their name from one of his songs, and countless other rock and rollers who have found their hearts in the blues.

POSTSCRIPT The folk blues craze was not confined to bookish white kids in America; their European counterparts were arguably even more fanatical. And so Buddy first toured Europe in 1965 as part of the American Folk Blues Festival, a package tour organized by German promoters Horst Lippmann and Fritz Rau and featuring greats like Mississippi Fred McDowell, Big Mama Thornton, Eddie Boyd and Roosevelt Sykes. It was on German soil, ironically, that Buddy first met one of his greatest blues heroes: John Lee Hooker. Growing up in Lettsworth, Louisiana, Buddy had just about worn out a copy of Hooker's classic "Boogie Chillen'." When Buddy's parents confiscated the phonograph needle, he'd take a stickpin—a piece of jewelry for securing a necktie—hold it in his teeth and place it on the record, letting Hooker's driving rhythms resonate in his skull. And on one fateful morning in Baden Baden in 1965, Buddy Guy finally came face to face with his hero—although he didn't realize it was Hooker at first.

"Everybody was heavy drinkers back then," Buddy says. "And when I went down to breakfast in the morning they had whiskey eggs. I sat in the corner with an acoustic guitar and started playin' 'Boogie Chillen',' which was the first thing I'd learned how to play by myself. And this guy comes up. He was drinkin' and stutterin' bad: 'Y-y-y-you t-t-t-tryin' to play J-J-J-ohnny...' I say, 'Yeah, I guess so. I'm just trying to figure out who the fuck you are, stutterin' so.' Finally Fred Below said, 'That's John Lee Hooker right there!' And Hooker just started to laugh. Boy, he laughed so hard he cried. We became best friends from that day till the day he died. I was at his funeral."



With Eric Clapton at the Crossroads Guitar Festival, Bridgeview, Illinois, July 28, 2007

ROB GRABOWSKI / RETNA LTD.

"ERIC CLAPTON TOLD ME HE HARDLY EVEN REMEMBERS MAKING THAT RECORD. HE WAS HIGH ALL THE TIME." —ON MAKING *BUDDY GUY & JUNIOR WELLS PLAY THE BLUES*

"MAN OF MANY WORDS" BY BUDDY GUY & JUNIOR WELLS

DATE Recorded in October, 1970

WHY IT COUNTS A staple of the Buddy Guy repertoire and one of Buddy's own compositions; his first significant collaboration with Eric Clapton

STUDIO Criteria Recording, 1755 NE 149th St., Miami

BACKSTORY Buddy first teamed up with harmonica ace Junior Wells in the mid Sixties. They became a popular live act and by 1970 had landed a high-visibility opening spot on the Rolling Stones tour. During this period, Eric Clapton was just finishing off his classic Derek and the Dominos album *Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs* while getting deeper and deeper into what would become a debilitating heroin addiction. Clapton was an avid Buddy Guy fan and back in '65 had slept in a van with other members of the Yardbirds to be among the first in a venue where Buddy was playing on his maiden voyage to Europe. Five years later, as final mixes of *Layla* were underway, Eric Clapton decided he wanted to make a record with Buddy Guy.

"Ahmet Ertegun [*head of Derek and the Dominoes' label, Atlantic Records*] was hangin' out with Clapton," Buddy explains. "At this time [*Atlantic recording artist*] Aretha Franklin was poppin' and everything Ertegun touched was turning to gold. Clapton told him, 'I don't know why you want to record me. The best guitar player in the world is touring with the Rolling Stones right now.' So they grabbed a plane, flew to Paris and watched me and Junior Wells open the show for the Stones that night. Afterward [*Ertegun*] just walks up and says, 'I'll make a fuckin' hit record on you. When you get off this tour with the Stones, come straight to Miami and record an album for Atlantic Records.' We went down there, and Eric told me later on he hardly even remembers making that record. He was high all the time."

THE TRACK An uptempo funk soul workout that marries an insistent G7 guitar riff to a wicked, syncopated bass line. Buddy busts loose as a soul-preachin' loverman. "I was listening to a lot

of Otis Redding and those guys, who were selling a lot of records then," he recalls of his inspiration for writing the tune. " 'Cause back then, just like now, you can make the best blues record in the world, but it won't get no airplay."

The slippery, open-ended groove provides an ideal vehicle for some of the most fast-paced, manic soloing ever to issue from the fingers and guitar of Buddy Guy. Yeah, he flubs a few notes, but the whole thing beautifully encapsulates the breezy wild energy of that hastily organized date down in Miami.

PRODUCTION NOTES There were no rehearsals or preproduction. What you hear is pretty much what Buddy and the band threw down in the studio. The whole thing was a little too nonchalant for Atlantic, who initially shelved the project. It wasn't until two years later, when Buddy recorded two extra songs with the J. Geils Band, that the label finally had what it deemed was an entire album of release-worthy material. "Man of Many Words" became the lead track on 1972's *Buddy Guy and Junior Wells Play the Blues*.

BUDDY'S GEAR His '57 Strat and Bassman amp

KEY PLAYERS Eric Clapton is on second guitar. New Orleans keyboard legend Dr. John (Mac Rebennack) is on piano. The rhythm section features Derek and the Dominos bassist Carl Radle and drummer Jim Gordon—an all-star cast captured on tape by engineering legend Tom Dowd.

"Mustang Sally"

DATE 1991

WHY IT COUNTS Historic pairing of Buddy and his fellow guitar legend Jeff Beck on Buddy's "comeback" album, *Damn Right I Got the Blues*.

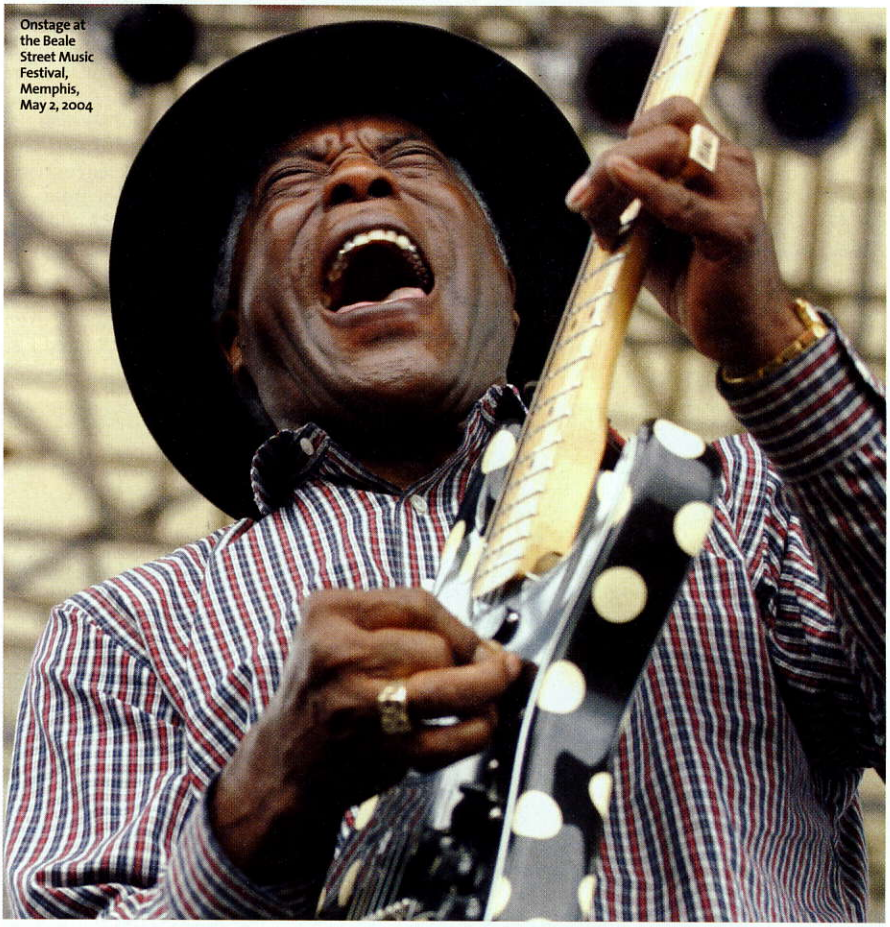
STUDIO Battery Studios, 14/16 Chaplin Rd., London

BACKSTORY The Seventies and Eighties were lean years for Buddy Guy. With no American recording contract, he barely got by reprising his past triumphs for various European labels. His luck changed when Eric Clapton invited him to take part in the all-star 24 Nights concerts at London's Royal Albert Hall in 1990 and '91. This led to a contract with Silvertone Records—still Buddy's label today—and a major comeback.

"This British guy comes up to me backstage at the Royal Albert Hall and says, 'I wanna sign you to do this album.' I'm sayin', Okay Buddy, this is British guys now. Here's your Johnny-come-later Jimi Hendrix chance. [*Hendrix was "discovered" by English manager Chas Chandler.*] You can do your own thing now. I went to Battery Studios in England, cut *Damn Right I Got the Blues*, and that was the biggest record I ever had."

THE TRACK A stomping, uptown rendition of the R&B classic made famous by Wilson Pickett. Buddy Guy's "Mustang" boasts a big horn section, soul-sister backing vocals and, of course, the over-the-top guitar stylings of Jeff Beck, whose electrifying leads go line for line with Buddy's brash vocal. Beck is another Strat-bearing British rock guitar god who got major inspiration when Buddy landed in England in '65. Here he returns the favor.

PRODUCTION NOTES "Beck and I are the best of friends," says Buddy. "He come in the studio



Onstage at the Beale Street Music Festival, Memphis, May 2, 2004

Performing with Carlos Santana in San Francisco, September 26, 2004

TOP: BRIAN HINELINE / RETNA LTD.; BOTTOM: JAY BLAKESBERG / RETNA LTD.

after we cut the basic track and they plugged his guitar through the engineer room [*i.e. control room*]. I was in the engineer room when he put that guitar track on there. Man, that guy can play."

BUDDY'S GEAR For most of the *Damn Right, I've Got the Blues* sessions, Buddy played an Eric Clapton Signature Model Fender Strat, procured from a London music shop. He liked the guitar so much that it became the basis for Fender's Buddy Guy Signature Model Strat, first released commercially in 1995.

KEY PLAYERS Beck and Buddy are more than enough talent for any track, but the massively solid backbeat on this recording was provided by Little Feat drummer Richie Hayward.

POSTSCRIPT According to Buddy's guitar tech Mark Messner, the guitarist currently owns seven polka-dot Strats, many of them equipped with the same built-in preamp found in the Eric Clapton signature Strat. Four of Buddy's polka-dot Strats were made by the Fender Custom Shop, with pickups ranging from Lace sensors to Texas Specials. The remaining three are production-line Buddy Guy Signature models from Fender's manufacturing facility in Mexico. One of these instruments is equipped with '59 humbuckers and another has vintage noiseless pickups. Buddy often uses the latter guitar when he plays at his Legends club, which has significant buzz issues, according to Messner.

Most recently, Buddy has taken to playing a '72 Telecaster Deluxe onstage. His live amp rig consists of a Fender '59 reissue Bassman LTD, a Vibraverb and an Eighties Marshall JCM800 head through a Tone Tubby 1x12 cube. The latter is isolated and miked offstage.

"Baby Please Don't Leave Me"

DATE 2001

WHY IT COUNTS Buddy Guy finds the missing link between blues and punk

STUDIO Sweet Tea, Oxford, Mississippi

BACKSTORY By the start of the 21st century, Buddy Guy was ready to reinvent himself once again. For his 2001 album, *Sweet Tea*, record producer Dennis Herring teamed him up with a coterie of younger players from the world of post-punk and alternative rock, including Squirrel Nut Zippers/Knockdown Society guitarist Jimbo Mathus and Elvis Costello's rhythm section consisting of bassist Davey Faragher and drummer Pete Thomas. In the cozy confines of Herring's Sweet Tea studio, located in the picturesque small town of Oxford, Mississippi, Buddy and his new backup musicians dug into a selection of songs drawn principally from the repertoires of North Mississippi bluesmen Junior Kimbrough and T-Model Ford. Both artists record for Fat Possum Records. The maverick raw-blues imprint, distributed by L.A. punk label Epitaph, has been responsible for turning a whole new generation of punk rockers on to the blues.

"When I first came to Chicago, I found the Wolf, Otis Rush, Otis Span and all those guys," says Buddy. "I thought I done dug up everything there is. But when I went down there [*to Mississippi*], Dennis Herring started bringing up this Junior Kimbrough stuff. He's a guy never hardly did leave Mississippi. I said, 'Wow, man. I didn't dig deep enough.' It goes to show, you never get too old to learn."

THE TRACK A slow, brooding, seven-minute excursion in C, built off a Hendrix-like guitar riff and a grainy, subsonic bass that never ventures too far from the tonic. Liberated from the 12-bar grid, Buddy soars into the stratosphere. Fanciful, full-blown rock production values—flangy, echoed vocals and a soaking wet, sustaining lead tone—bring out aspects of Buddy's prodigious talent never quite captured by the more documentary approach of his recordings from the Nineties and earlier.

PRODUCTION NOTES "I cut that record in the hall of Sweet Tea," says Buddy. "The band was set up in the studio. I could see 'em through a glass door. But I was in the hall with all these amps. Dennis Herring has a lot of these great old amps. A lot of those guitar sounds you hear on that record had something to do with him. He's got one of them old [*mixing*] boards that he got out of L.A. somewhere. It's as close as you can get to the old studios."

KEY PLAYER Also on the sessions was the drummer Spam, veteran of many Fat Possum recordings. Although he had suffered a mild stroke, Spam managed to impress Buddy, who told him, "Shit, if I woulda saw you before you had the stroke, I probably woulda moved down here to Mississippi just to play with you." **BL**

AX MUSEUM
PORTRAITS OF GUITAR HEROES

JOHN LEE HOOKER

THE KING OF THE BOOGIE RULED THE BLUES FOR MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY.

By KEITH WYATT

OVER THE YEARS, any number of blues guitarists have been able to lay claim to a personal style, but scant few could rightfully claim possession of an entire musical attitude. John Lee Hooker could—he was the original proprietor of the groove known as *boogie*. More than just a rhythmic feel, boogie is an attitude—one of sex combined with danger, of life on the edge in a world that's raw, down and extremely dirty. And it permeates Hooker's music no matter what the setting or style.

In the 50 years during which Hooker made records, he explored the blues in its various forms both on acoustic and electric guitar. While words like "organic," "earthy" and even "primitive" have frequently been used to describe his talent on both instruments, the guitarist himself remained modest on the subject of his abilities. "I believe I was born with the gift God gave me," he once said. "But I had to develop it."

HISTORY AND INFLUENCES

HE WAS BORN in 1920 into a large, sharecropping family in Clarksdale, Mississippi, the heart of Delta blues country. Inspiration for his earliest musical explorations came from his stepfather, Will Moore, a preacher and musician whose home provided a stopover for some of the era's traveling blues legends, including Charley Patton, Blind Blake and Blind Lemon Jefferson. Lacking cash or the means to get it, Hooker followed the time-honored, country poor-boy tradition of fashioning a "guitar" from available materials. By stretching strips of old inner tubes to a barn door, Hooker created a crude instrument upon which he began to emulate the style of Moore and his friends.

As Hooker grew into his teens, his mother and stepfather differed over the wisdom of his musical pursuits. His mother's continued resistance finally drove Hooker out of the house and off to Memphis, where the Beale Street music scene was thriving. After spending a few years working as a movie usher and playing for spare change in W.C. Handy Park (where he rubbed shoulders with a very young B.B. King), Hooker was ready for another move, this time to Cincinnati.

Seven years later, another relocation produced the payoff he needed. Hooker landed in Detroit in 1943, attracted by the prospects of well-paying work on a wartime assembly line and new musical opportunities in the jumping Hastings Street nightclubs. "A lot of blues players went to Chicago," Hooker said. "I went to Detroit because there was less competition."

It was while performing in the clubs that he began to play electric guitar, trying to make himself heard above the noise of the patrons. The new instrument put a solid, electric kick into his boogie, much to the delight of his audience.

Hooker plugged away at the Detroit clubs, building his chops and a hard-won reputation. His persistence finally paid off in 1948 when a talent scout brought Hooker to the attention of Bernard Besman, owner of United Sound Studio. In his first session for Besman, Hooker played a Will Moore–inspired guitar boogie over which he sang an autobiographical description of a young musician's family struggles. The resulting record, "Boogie Chillen'," was an instant hit, and it put Hooker's name on the musical map.

Hooker continued to turn out hit records at an astonishing pace. "Crawling King Snake Blues"

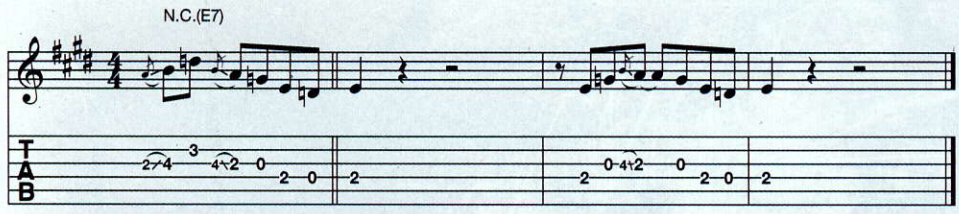
PG 32

JAY BLAKESBERG / RETNA LTD.

FIGURE 1 Open A Tuning (low to high, E A E A C♯ E) Medium Shuffle (♩♫ = ♩³♪)

FIGURE 2 Standard tuning Medium Shuffle (♩♫ = ♩³♪)

FIGURE 3 Standard tuning Medium Shuffle (♩♫ = ♩³♪)



(based on a theme extending back even beyond Blind Lemon Jefferson), "John L's House Rent Boogie" and "I'm in the Mood" (a very oblique reference to Glenn Miller's swing chestnut "In the Mood") are just three of his titles that made the charts in the next few years. Hooker, it seemed, would record anytime, any place, for any label and under practically any name, including John Lee Booker, John Lee Cooker, Johnny Lee, Johnny Williams and Birmingham Sam and His Magic Guitar.

Like his Chicago contemporary Muddy Waters, Hooker served up an unpretentious, down-home style that resonated with displaced southerners who had packed the big northern cities during and after the war. Whether playing acoustic or electric, he could evoke times past and present, and locations from the Delta to Detroit, with just his guitar, voice and foot. The force of his delivery shone through even such rather bizarre experiments as 1952's "Walking the Boogie," with its multi-tracked vocals and sped-up guitar overdubs.

In the mid Fifties, Hooker began working more frequently with bands that included very able guitarists such as Eddie Taylor (better known as Jimmy Reed's partner) and Eddie Kirkland. What's more, his recordings from this period for the Vee-Jay label helped extend his influence overseas. Tunes like "Dimples" and "Boom Boom" made Hooker a virtual icon among young British musicians and inspired several successful blues rock bands, including the Animals and the Yardbirds.

As the music business shifted its production from 78 rpm records to singles and albums, Hooker continued to crank out material for various labels right through the Sixties, introducing standards like the Muddy Waters–inspired "Big Legs, Tight Skirt" and "One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer." His 1970 collaboration with Canned Heat, *Hooker & Heat*, came at the high-water mark of the blues rock era and was a big seller across America. Even during the Seventies and Eighties, after the blues lost its commercial appeal, John Lee Hooker records could still be found in suburban record stores next to those of other perennial sellers, like B.B. King and Jimmy Reed.

Remarkably, Hooker's career enjoyed a new wave of success, beginning in 1989 with *The Healer*, a collaboration between Hooker and a crew of his disciples that included Carlos Santana, Bonnie Raitt, Robert Cray, Los Lobos and George Thorogood. It was followed by the aptly named *Mr. Lucky* and several other recordings made in the same all-star vein. Hooker lived out his final years in San Francisco, where he opened a club called John Lee Hooker's Boom Boom Room. He became ill prior to a 2001 European tour and died shortly after at the age of 83. "I've had a good time," Hooker said in late life, reflecting on his career. "I got two generations of people listening to my music, and maybe I'll get me a third." Most certainly he will.

Style and Technique

JOHN LEE GAVE full props to his stepfather, Will Moore, when it came to the origins of the boogie. Moore and other practitioners of what Muddy Waters called "deep blues" stripped music right to the bone, creating a trance-like atmosphere in which repetition, surrounded by empty space, focused the listener on the feeling behind the music. Next to a propulsive rhythm, unadorned lyrics and no-bullshit vocal delivery, elements like chord changes, melodies and guitar solos become ornamental rather than essential.

By the standards of modern guitar technique, Hooker hangs by the slimmest of threads. Regular bar length, predictable changes and repeatable phrases fall by the wayside, and the voice and message become the guiding factors. In Hooker's music, there are no mistakes per se because the goal is not to play the same way every time; the goal is to capture "the moment."

FIGURE 1 is the shuffle phrase that defines "boogie." It's notated in open A tuning (low to high, E A E A C♯ E), the same tuning Hooker uses. The phrase is plucked with the thumb on the fifth string, and the index finger is used on all other strings. Play the triplets with one finger, sliding from fret to fret up the fifth string. This rhythm has been a source of inspiration for countless artists, from Slim Harpo to Canned Heat to ZZ Top.

Though Hooker is forever linked to boogie, he recorded in many styles, and most of his biggest hits were more traditional shuffles. One of these, "Dimples," is built around a unison guitar/vocal lick similar to that shown in **FIGURE 2**, while another, "Boom Boom," features a distinctive call-and-response arrangement of vocal and guitar like that shown in **FIGURE 3** (both examples are played in standard tuning). These two phrases form part of the basic vocabulary of blues guitar.

Gear

HOOKER'S SOUND WAS molded by the force of his personal style, not by his gear. He always sounded like himself, whether playing a variety of acoustics or a selection of Gibson and Epiphone electrics, including a Les Paul Goldtop with P90 "soapbar" pickups and, in his final years, ES-335 and ES-345 semihollow electrics. He used both open A and standard tunings. Beyond that, his setup basically consisted of a cord plugged into an amp.

Selected Listening

MUCH OF HOOKER'S DIVERSE catalog is still in print. Some of the best include: *The Ultimate Collection* on Rhino, *John Lee Hooker Plays and Sings the Blues* and *The Healer*, a modern production with an all-star cast. **BL**

TOMBSTONE BLUES

B.B. KING CONTEMPLATES MORTALITY AND REFLECTS ON THE GUITAR HEROES OF HIS YOUTH WITH *ONE KIND FAVOR*, HIS 2008 ALBUM OF CLASSIC BLUES INTERPRETATIONS.

By ALAN DI PERNA

B. KING REMEMBERS opening a show for the Rolling Stones in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1969. "I guess I'd been recording for 20 years or so at that time," the legendary bluesman recounts. "After the show, a little white lady come up to me. She had two teenage kids. She was a very nice lady and told me how much she and her kids enjoyed what I had done. And she said, 'Have you made any records?' I said 'Yes, ma'am.' I didn't want to be facetious, so I just said, 'Yes, ma'am, I have.' And she said, 'You think I could find some?' So I went on to tell her. She was just being honest, and I appreciated that."

PG 34

It's hard to imagine anyone being unfamiliar with the undisputed King of the Blues. But the anecdote says a lot about King's humility, equanimity and kindness, qualities that have sustained him for years and endeared him to the hearts of millions of fans all over the world. Since he began making records in 1949, King has amassed one of the most impressive catalogs in all of blues history, a legacy that includes blues standards like "Rock Me Baby," "Every Day I Have the Blues," "Sweet Little Angel," "Paying the Cost to Be the Boss" and "The Thrill Is Gone."

Anyone who plays, or even tries to play, electric blues guitar is B.B. King's disciple. This has been acknowledged by many of the greats, including Eric Clapton, who has recorded extensively with the master, notably on the 2000 CD *Riding with the King*. Keith Richards, Billy Gibbons, Bonnie Raitt and U2 are among many other rock and blues icons that have recorded with King and paid him homage.

But King topped even this with his album *One Kind Favor*. Released in September 2008, it's a career-defining work, a grand statement that finds the King of the Blues interpreting the songs of the bluesmen who were *his* heroes, including Blind Lemon Jefferson, Lonnie Johnson and T-Bone Walker, not to mention those who were his friends and contemporaries, such as Howlin' Wolf and John Lee Hooker. It's an eloquently honest disc, cut live in the studio with an ace backing band anchored by bassist Nathan East and the celebrated New Orleans pianist Dr. John (Mac Rebennack). At the production helm was T-Bone Burnett, the perfect man for the job considering his ascendancy as a prime curator of roots music traditions for soundtracks to the films *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* and *Walk the Line*, and his production work for legends like Ralph Stanley, Roy Orbison and the 2007 Robert Plant/Alison Krauss effort, *Raising Sand*.

Reprinted from GUITAR WORLD, *NOVEMBER 2008*

JAY BLAKESBERG / RETNA LTD.

Photographed in San Francisco,
September 25, 1994

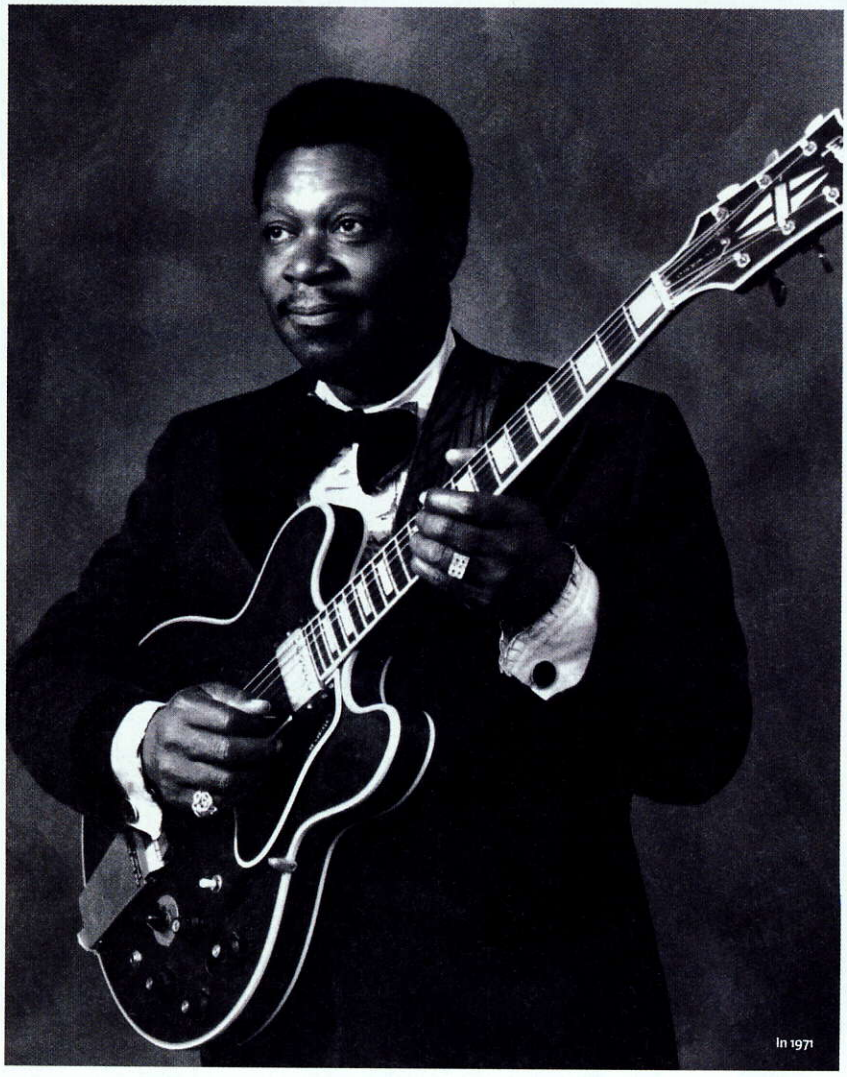
"I really learned a lot about guitar playing just by watching and hearing B.B. play," says Burnett, himself a well-regarded axman. "I learned a lot about freedom, ease and grace. And I learned a lot from Dr. John about communication. I learned a lot about the way blues is orchestrated and the way it grew in the first place. It's through communication among musicians that it grew into this thing we call the blues."

And on a hot summer's day in Reno, Nevada, several months after sessions were completed, B.B. King finally heard the finished product—edited, mixed and spiked with deeply sympathetic brass arrangements overdubbed by longtime Burnett cohort Darrell Leonard. The disc had been in King's possession for about two weeks at this point. He just hadn't gotten around to listening to it. The man tours relentlessly (some have speculated that touring is what keeps him alive), and entertaining audiences like the casino crowd he'd face later that evening in Reno is every bit as important to him as an album that has had critics, journalists and blues aficionados doing back flips ever since the first advance copies became available.

"Oh, they makin' a big 'do out of it," King drawls. "It's okay. I haven't heard some of the things everybody else seems to hear in it. But one thing I can admit is we had a good producer. And we had terrific musicians. And I think the songs was okay, 'cause they've been recorded by some of the best blues players. But to hook it all up and hear what some folks is hearin', well I ain't heard it yet. But then I did just heard it for the first time today. I ain't lyin' to you."

Part of what makes *One Kind Favor* so compelling is the sense of mortality that permeates the album. The lead track is Blind Lemon Jefferson's somber meditation on death, "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean." The request is the "one kind favor" asked by the bluesman, who goes on to visualize his internment in vivid detail: the digging of the grave, the funeral procession with two white horses that bear the coffin to its final resting place. Other tracks, like Howlin' Wolf's "How Many More Years," also speak of the grave. It's a chilling experience to hear this material feelingly interpreted by King, so near the end of man's usual natural lifespan. The emotional effect confers a retrospective, if not downright posthumous, mood to the album. While King makes light of it, on some level he surely knew that this might be the last album he'd ever record, and he wants to share some of the songs that have imparted meaning to his long and rich life.

"When I was younger I never thought about death," he says. "But now, at my age, sometimes I do. I even found a place where I'd like to be buried, back in my hometown in Indianola, Mississippi. I had a lot of thoughts earlier that I wanted to be cremated. But no, I don't think so now. 'Cause if there is another world, as some think there is—I'm a believer, but I never believed in that—I wanna have all my parts with me!"



In 1971

"IF THERE IS ANOTHER WORLD, AS SOME THINK THERE IS, I WANNA HAVE ALL MY PARTS WITH ME!"

T-Bone Burnett was also keenly aware of the trust that had been placed in his hands. "I knew fairly quickly the kind of record I wanted to make with B.B.," says the producer, "which was the kind of records he made when I first started listening to him: the things he did back on Central Avenue [*L.A.'s storied jazz and R&B corridor*] in the Fifties and Sixties with [*arranger*] Maxwell Davis. 'Cause I still love those records. They're classical music, really. So I definitely wanted this album to be like that. I think that's where B.B.'s sound was invented."

It was King's management who put him together with Burnett. The two men met face-to-face for the first time in Atlantic City, New Jersey. "T-Bone said, 'I would like to do something that would put you back in the early parts of your career,' " King recalls. " 'Would you mind that?' I said, 'No, I don't mind, but my voice is not like it was then.' He said, 'No, I just meant somewhat in the context of what you were doing then and how you were doing it.' I told him, 'No, I don't mind. The only thing I do mind is I wanna be myself. I don't want you to try and make me into something else.' He said, 'Oh no, B.B., be yourself.' I said, 'If you do that, we got it.' "

Producer and artist worked together on the selection of material for the album, culling the choicest tunes from the vast ocean of blues repertoire. "T-Bone made up a list of songs that he thought would be good," says King, "and he asked me to make up a list of songs I thought would be good. So we did. And—would you believe it?—we both come up with almost the same tunes."

Burnett had a very vivid idea of the sonic ambience he wanted to create. "In the movie soundtracks I've done, I've been working in different time periods," he explains. "And I always try to make it sound not like some impersonation of a period. I always try to put myself back in that time and say, 'What would this have sounded like if I had actually been in the room with it?' Try to do it with a sense of reality like that. The kind of room I was imagining B.B. in was a room where I'd seen him play in the Sixties, called the Central Forest Ballroom, in Dallas, Texas. It was just a beautiful dancehall, a big, boomy, wild place. I wanted this album to have some of

RB / REDFERNS / RETNA

the sense of that kind of room in it."

So Burnett booked the big studio at the Village Recorders in L.A., a former Masonic Temple and historic place in its own right. And he filled that room with a coterie of handpicked players. "The way I produced this record is we all set up in a small circle with everybody looking at each other," says Burnett. "And I just sat right between B.B. and Dr. John. They were on either side of me, about two or three feet away. I could hear the whole band really well, but I could especially hear B.B. and Mac. And I knew that if the two of them were killin' it, then it was killed."

were going for, to make it so you can't exactly tell what's going on."

True enough. Most of our current sense of the blues derives from the mid-Fifties Chicago blues sound of Chess Records, as appropriated by the Rolling Stones and other British Invaders and perpetuated by present day labels like Alligator. But *One Kind Favor* steeps us in more of a Forties-based R&B sensibility, a more suave, urbane vein with big horn charts and a more relaxed rhythmic sensibility. Lonnie Johnson (1894–1970) and T-Bone Walker (1909–1975) were two guitarist/vocalists who crossed from

one of his recent signature model Gibson ES-355 "Lucille" guitars. He seems both perplexed and amused when asked if he brought out some of his older instruments for more of a vintage tone. "Why?" he chuckles. "I'm not so good that I can play five or six guitars, or eight or 10, like I see some of these guys do. I've got many of the same [*i.e. many 355s and 335s*], but only one that I'm playing now, and that's the one I like."

King brought his Gibson amp into the studio, which Burnett supplemented with a couple of vintage tweed Fender Deluxe amps. The rhythm guitarists who played on some of the tracks

Rehearsing at the Royal Albert Hall, London, in 1969

"Had nobody been there but me and Dr. John, we still would've made the record," B.B. confirms. " 'Cause I love the way he plays. I've made several LPs with him before."

King had also worked with Nathan East on Eric Clapton sessions and dates and with *One Kind Favor* drummer Jim Keltner, a seasoned vet who's played with everyone from Dylan to Lennon. But Burnett did an interesting thing with the rhythm section. On most tracks, he teamed East on acoustic bass with Mike Elizondo on electric bass. And Keltner is co-drumming with Jay Bellerose, all playing live in the studio.

"You know there's two drummers on a lot of those Maxwell Davis tracks, for starters," Burnett explains. "Also, I've grown weary of backbeat blues shuffles. It's been so overdone. And it got codified into one thing, whereas really the swing is so complicated. So Jim and Jay are two great drummers who know how to blur each other a little bit. So you don't know exactly what's going on rhythmically. That's always what we

R&B into the domain of jazz. This has always been an important musical migration for King, who prides himself on having recorded with the great jazz bandleader Duke Ellington and having played at numerous jazz clubs and festivals.

But at the same time, *One Kind Favor* pays homage to the rural folk blues of artists like Blind Lemon Jefferson (1897–1930), Big Bill Broonzy (1897–1958) and the Mississippi Sheiks, who flourished in the Twenties and Thirties. But the disc also includes the Chess legacy, as represented by the mighty Howlin' Wolf (1910–1976), and gives a nod to John Lee Hooker (1920–2001), King's good friend and an artist perhaps more well known to present-day rock and rollers than some of the other bluesmen whom King covers. So not only is *One Kind Favor* a brilliant recording in its own right but also a first-rate education in the blues, edifying for newcomers, life affirming for longtime devotees and highly entertaining for all.

For the *One Kind Favor* sessions, King played

were Johnny Lee Schell and Stephen Bruton, with Neil Larson on Hammond B-3 rounding out the lineup for the basic tracks.

"I've known both Steve and Johnny Lee for a long time," says Burnett, "and I knew they'd be the right guitar players for this. I wanted it to sound rough. We didn't have any transistors on this record. I just wanted it to sound coarse and beautiful. And Johnny knows how to do that. So does Steve. I didn't want any of those modern kind of pickups or any of that. P-90s—those are good."

There were no advance rehearsals. The band would run through a song a few times in the studio, find an arrangement and go for a take. Amazingly, all of King's vocals and guitar solos were cut live with the basic tracks. The sessions really brought out the best in him. He digs deeper and plays with more conviction than he has in a long time. It's a particular delight to hear things like the diminished scale runs in the beautiful R&B ballad "Waiting for Your Call." But again, egg-

MICHAEL PUTLAND / RETNA LTD.

Thrilling crowds in the Seventies

Smokin' in 1971

head analyses like these seem a comedic waste of breath to the King of the Blues.

"*Uhhhh*, that's just the way I cut it," he demurs when pressed for details regarding the solo. "We didn't do all first takes. We did some of them two or three times. But it was enjoyable, because each one of those guys is a terrific musician. When they get an idea of what you're trying to do, they help you to do it."

The arrangement of "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean" is particularly inspired. Its New Orleans rhumba feel is miles from Blind Lemon's original recording, and most other covers of the song for that matter. But that second line undertow, a rhythm derived from New Orleans street funerals, suits the song's subject matter in a curiously joyous and jaunty way.

"B.B. has used that kind of rhythm before," Burnett points out. " 'Woke Up This Morning' starts off with that kind of rhumba beat and then goes into one of those big-band shuffles, a Count Basie kind of chorus. And with Keltner and Jay we were getting into all sorts of in-between time, different degrees of shuffle. So who knows? B.B. started singing it, the band started playing it, and that was it. Once it got started, I didn't stop them. That's what being a producer is. You don't want to do anything to break the spell. That song, by the way, was the second-to-last one that we recorded. And the very last was 'Tomorrow Night,' which wound up being the last song on the album. So by that time, B.B. had the frame. I think he cut those two songs as the beginning and end of the record."

At the same time that *One Kind Favor* was released, the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center was opening its doors in King's home town of Indianola, MS. [*see sidebar*] The $15 million, 18,000-square-foot facility is packed with B.B. memorabilia and exhibits elucidating other aspects of Delta blues culture.

"It might sound like I'm bragging, but I think it's just super to have something like that in my honor," says B.B. "I believe it's one of the things that will be left here when I'm gone that people will enjoy for years and years. I truly believe that."

Spending time with B.B. King is like being in the company of a venerable old grandfather or tribal elder. He's lived in a world that you'll never know—a better world in some ways, a far worse one in others, particularly for African Americans. But there are no straight paths back to that world. Ask a question about a guitar or a song and you might get a story about how B.B. learned to fly an airplane in the early Sixties, or how one of his many ex-wives burnt all his beloved possessions during a nasty divorce. Ask about a bluesman of yore and you might learn about B.B.'s recent readings in natural history: "At one time, the snake got legs, you know."

But wherever the journey leads, it's always well worth the ride.

GUITAR WORLD How old were you when you first heard Blind Lemon Jefferson's recording of "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean"?

B.B. KING I was a boy. I don't remember exactly, but I had to be somewhere around nine or 10. I've always liked Blind Lemon, and "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean" happened to be one that I thought it was time to do again. I ain't heard anybody lately do it—not the way I

ABOVE: DAVID REDFERN / REDFERNS / RETNA LTD.; BELOW: KEITH MORRIS / REDFERNS / RETNA LTD.

wanted to do it. The kind favor is you're asking someone to see that your grave be kept clean. It's sort of funny, 'cause where my mother is buried at, I go up there tryin' to find the grave but never could find it. Until recently some guy found it, and he keeps it. So whenever I do come there, I know where it is.

GW Listening to your interpretation of the song, I realized, or perhaps re-realized that, hey, that's a gospel chord progression.

KING Well, I started out playing gospel. A gospel singer is what I wanted to be, but here's what happened: Sitting on the street corners playing, people would ask me to play a gospel song. And when I did they'd compliment me, but never tip me. And the people who asked me to play a blues song always tipped. At that time, my mid teens I guess, I was driving a tractor. Out of nine tractor drivers, I was about number three. I was making about 22-and-a-half dollars a week. The way the economy was in the area at that time, that was pretty good money for farmin'. But I'd go to town sometimes and make 40 or 50 dollars just sitting on the corner playing music. I made as high as a hundred dollars sometimes. So you can see what motivated me to play the blues.

GW On this album you pay tribute to one of your great heroes, Lonnie Johnson. What was it that grabbed you about his playing? Was it his pioneering use of single-note leads?

KING I can't really tell you, 'cause if I could tell you that I could play like him. Now I'm 82, and I've still never been able to do that. But all those guys who influenced me had something that was similar, meaning that a lot of times it seemed to be like a guy with a sword that went straight through me. The feeling with the jazz players like Charlie Christian, Django Reinhardt and T-Bone Walker was the same, but in a different way.

GW Did you ever meet Lonnie Johnson?

KING I met Lonnie before he died. I saw him play once. He was playing over in Canada, in Toronto. A friend of mine who first booked me in Canada took me to see him. That was the only time I ever saw him live. He died some months later.

GW What was it like to meet him? Sometimes it's not such a great idea to meet your heroes.

KING Well, I didn't know how to talk to him. I never knew how to talk to him. But I also had a chance to play with T-Bone Walker at Monterey. I met T-Bone there and played with him, and that was another highlight.

GW When was that?

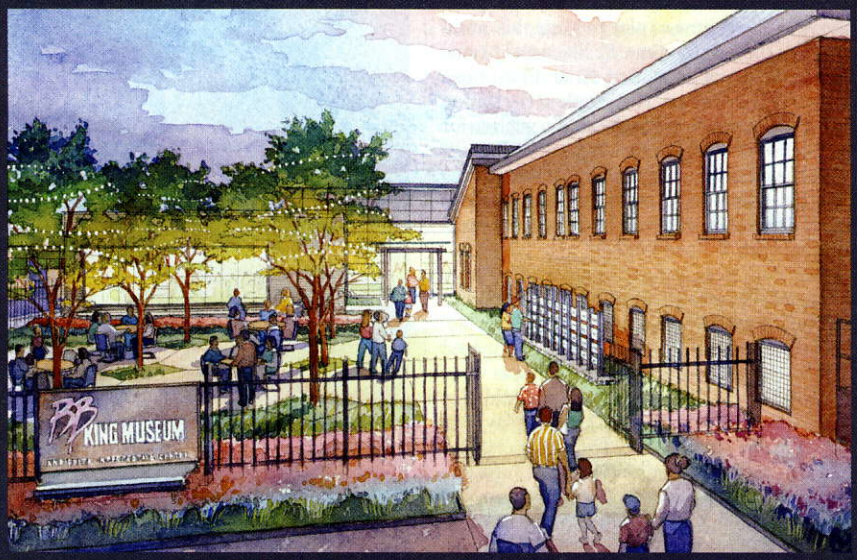
KING Oh, come on, man. I'm 82!

GW Well, tell me more.

KING I can't tell you that much except they had us playing. It's never been no secret that T-Bone Walker was one of my heroes. And this was his birthday or something like that. I can't remember exactly what it was, but they got us both on the stage that day. They had [*jazz sax great*] Illinois Jacquet and [*trumpeter*] Clark Terry. Clark Terry is one of the great jazz players and a very good friend. We all got onstage with T-Bone that day, and I have a clip of that. That day was like being born again for me.

GW But you'd met T-Bone before that? Do you go back a ways?

KING Well, I was a disc jockey trying to get started when I first met T-Bone. [*King began his career as a disc jockey in the late Forties and early Fifties at radio station WDIA in Memphis.*]



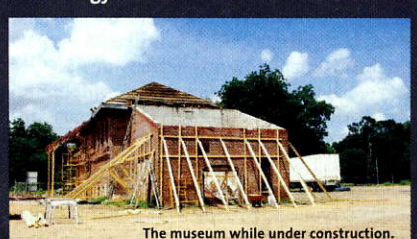
MISSISSIPPI LEARNING

THE NEW B.B. KING MUSEUM EDUCATES VISITORS ABOUT THE BLUES GUITARIST'S LIFE AND TIMES. *By* ALAN DI PERNA

AS BIRTHDAY PRESENTS GO, the B.B. King and Delta Interpretive Center wasn't too shabby. The 15-million-dollar facility opened its doors to the public on September 13, 2008, which was also B.B. King's 83rd birthday. Located in King's hometown of Indianola, Mississippi, the museum gives visitors a multimedia experience, bringing together artifacts, archival film and interactive exhibits chronicling the life and times of the King of the Blues, and the Mississippi Delta blues tradition of which he is a part.

The museum is built around an old cotton gin, the last one standing in Mississippi, where King worked during his youth in Indianola. "It's an old, brick building that has been beautifully restored," says Connie Gibbons, the museum's Executive Director. "When you drive up to the site, this fine-looking piece of historic architecture is the first thing you see. Everything else is kind of built behind it. As people come in they don't realize there's this big museum behind the gin. They're always surprised at how large it is."

Inside the 18,000-square-foot facility, visitors find a theater that can seat 150 people, equipped with a 180-degree screen for projecting concert footage and other historic film. There's a recording studio that allows the public to interact with technology and instruments. And of course there's a generous amount of exhibit space packed with B.B. King memorabilia: awards, documents and some of the many Gibson ES-355 and 335 guitars that have proudly borne the name "Lucille" over the years.


The museum while under construction.

"B.B. was incredibly generous with us when we spent some time with him at his home," Gibbons says. "In his house he's got this huge lineup of guitars, and we made some selections from his collection. He also let us have the recording studio he used in his home, which included a computer, keyboard and couple of racks filled with tape decks and recording equipment. The guitar he used in that studio was a blue Lucille, which we also have. You don't see too many in that color; they're usually black, of course. And we have three-quarter-size Lucilles, built for children, from B.B.'s collection, plus other instruments like an old Dobro very much like the one used by B.B.'s cousin [*legendary bluesman*] Bukka White."

The museum also includes exhibits on other notable Mississippi Delta bluesman, providing a rich sense of historical context. "We're part of the Mississippi Blues Trail, in terms of being an anchor destination for that," Gibbons says. "So a lot of what we deal with at the museum is who those musicians were: everybody from Charlie Patton to Muddy Waters to Robert Johnson. They're all part of the culture and musical history."

The B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center hopes to become a Mecca for guitar players, blues lovers and anyone interested in this vital aspect of American culture. "It's worth the trip," Gibbons says. "There are some exciting pilgrimages you can make in this whole area."

For more information, visit bbkingmuseum.org.

T-Bone Walker came to play in Memphis, and I was living there at the time. So like usual I came to work at the radio station 10 or 15 minutes before I went on the air. The people at the station said, "There's somebody in the studio waiting for you." So I went in, and there's T-Bone Walker sitting at the piano, playing it. I almost fell out.

GW You said you didn't know how to talk to Lonnie Johnson. Were you better able to communicate with T-Bone Walker?

KING Well, yes. 'Cause, see, I didn't have T-Bone to look up to all my life. See, I heard Lonnie Johnson when I was seven or eight years old. And T-Bone was more modernistic, compared to Lonnie. Now Lonnie, for his time, was what I hope to be now. He was a guy that could play with anyone and sit in well. I heard him play jazz, gospel, blues, even some country. And every time you heard him you knew it was Lonnie Johnson. He played some things with Duke Ellington, and you gotta be good to play with the Duke! Louis Armstrong also did some things with him, but so did [*iconic gospel singer*] Mahalia Jackson. Some people feel like that about me. They've used me on a lot of tunes, both over here and overseas. And I glad. 'Cause—I'll say it again—I wish I could be like Lonnie Johnson—that is, fit in well wherever I am.

GW So how did you choose which songs by Lonnie Johnson and T-Bone Walker you wanted to cover on this album?

KING Well, you know, I never could play like either of them, like I been sayin' all along. So I just tried to choose songs where I could be myself.

GW You're really throwing down on some of the vocals.

KING Let me put it this way. When I was young, I could holler loud. I could sustain a note and let it go a long time. Today it's more like waves on the ocean. When I was younger, I could control it a lot better. Now I can't control it as much, but I can still do some of the things I used to do. I had to learn a way to kind of halfway control my voice, which is nothing like I used to do.

GW You still hit the notes really strong at the outset, but they might subside a little quicker than before.

KING That's my way of trying to still bring something to it like what I used to do. And I think my guitar playing is maybe not quite as good as it once was. But I believe that the notes I play now say just about as much. I do.

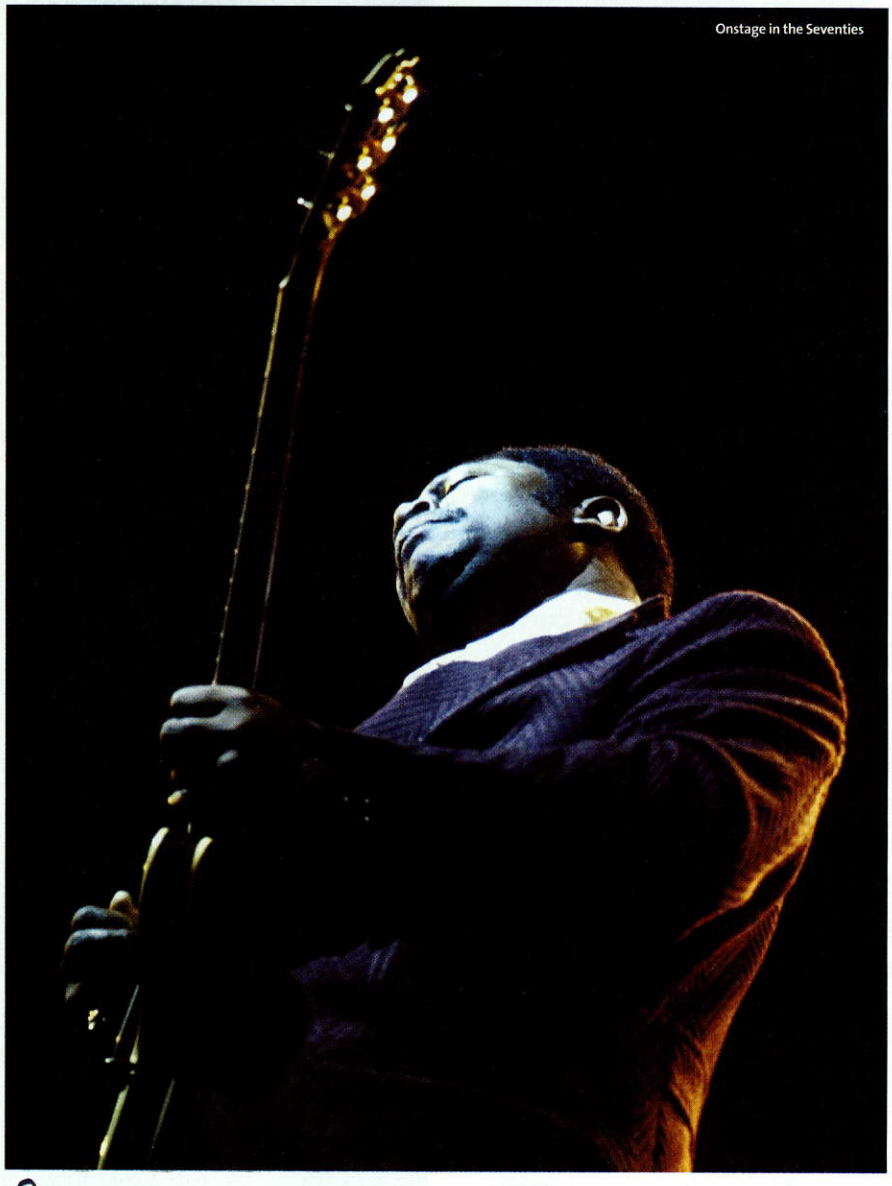
GW You also cover Howlin' Wolf's "How Many More Years" on the album. Did you know the Wolf?

KING I knew him, but we wasn't as friendly as I wish we could have been.

GW One thing that you and the Wolf have in common is that you both recorded at Sam Phillips' studio early on.

KING The first time I ever saw a studio was Sam Phillips' studio. "Sun Records" it was later called, but at the time it was just a studio. He didn't have a record company at the time. Before then, I'd made some records just at people's houses or a YMCA. They'd bring in an Ampex 600 [*tape machine*] and put some quilts on the walls to control the sound. But Sam Phillips was the first engineer I ever worked with.

GW But then the Bihari *brothers* [*owner of King's label at the time, Modern Records*] got pissed off because Sam was also recording stuff for the Chess brothers [*Leonard and Phil*]?



Onstage in the Seventies

"I ACT THE SAME WITH MY BAND AS I DO WITH MY FAMILY. ALL I WANT FROM THEM IS LOVE AND RESPECT."

KING You'll have to ask them that. Some people give the Bihari brothers a bad name and say they stole from the artists. But I think of it this way: a businessperson ain't gonna tell you much about the business unless you ask them. To them it's just business. They know they beatin' you, but it's just business with them. And that's what the U.S.A. is like. We got beat. So if you don't know any better, you don't learn any better. There was other people—Jimmy Reed, Muddy Waters...even Muddy was getting a better shake from the Chess brothers than I was. And I was selling a lot of records then. I sold a lot of records when I was young.

GW So you and Muddy would kind of compare notes on things like that?

KING No, no, we didn't have to do that. It was easy to find out without having to do that. Muddy and I never did talk about what they did for him. But I almost went with Chess Records once. I wanted $5,000 for some reason. Can't remember what it was for. And the Biharis wouldn't give it to me. So I told Muddy Waters to tell Chess that if they wanted me, if they gave me $5,000, I'd record for them. Muddy called them. And Leonard Chess, the old man, he come and talk to me. I signed a contract with him. But when the Bihari brothers heard about that, they ran. They come and told me they were sorry and this and that. And I stayed with them. We'd been together for a long time. I really liked Jules Bihari—even though I was only getting a half a cent a side for records. If I was in trouble, Jules would always give me an

DAVID REDFERN / REDFERNS / RETNA LTD.

advance on what I might make the next year or a year after. But people like the Biharis, the Chess brothers and all the rest of 'em is a businessman. That's just the way it is.

GW On your new record you also do "Blues Before Sunrise," a song attributed to John Lee Hooker. He was also a pal of yours, right?

KING John and I were very good friends. Only he was popular long before I was. John Lee Hooker was playin' when I was plowin'. He was a little older than I am. Not much, but a little. The funny thing is most of us left from the Deep South. John Lee went to Detroit. Muddy Waters went to Chicago. A lot of people went to Chicago. It was a haven for people from the South during the early Forties and Fifties. Farmhands would hear about getting work up north. Now I made my first record in 1949, but John Lee Hooker was already recording then. Muddy Waters was Muddy Waters then. So lot of those guys, as far as the blues is concerned, they were stars at the time. But I wasn't. So instead of me going to Chicago, I stopped in Memphis.

GW When was the last time you saw John Lee Hooker?

KING I hope I don't see him soon. He's been dead a while!

GW That's what I mean: when did you last see him before he died?

KING Oh, I guess about eight or nine months before he died. But I ain't ready to see him again yet. I don't want my grave to be kept clean that much! One of the sad things about us traveling musicians is we get a chance to run across one another from time to time, but rarely do we get a chance to get together and do like golf players or chess players do—we don't get to get together and have fun like we did in the early days, 'cause now we busy trying to make a living.

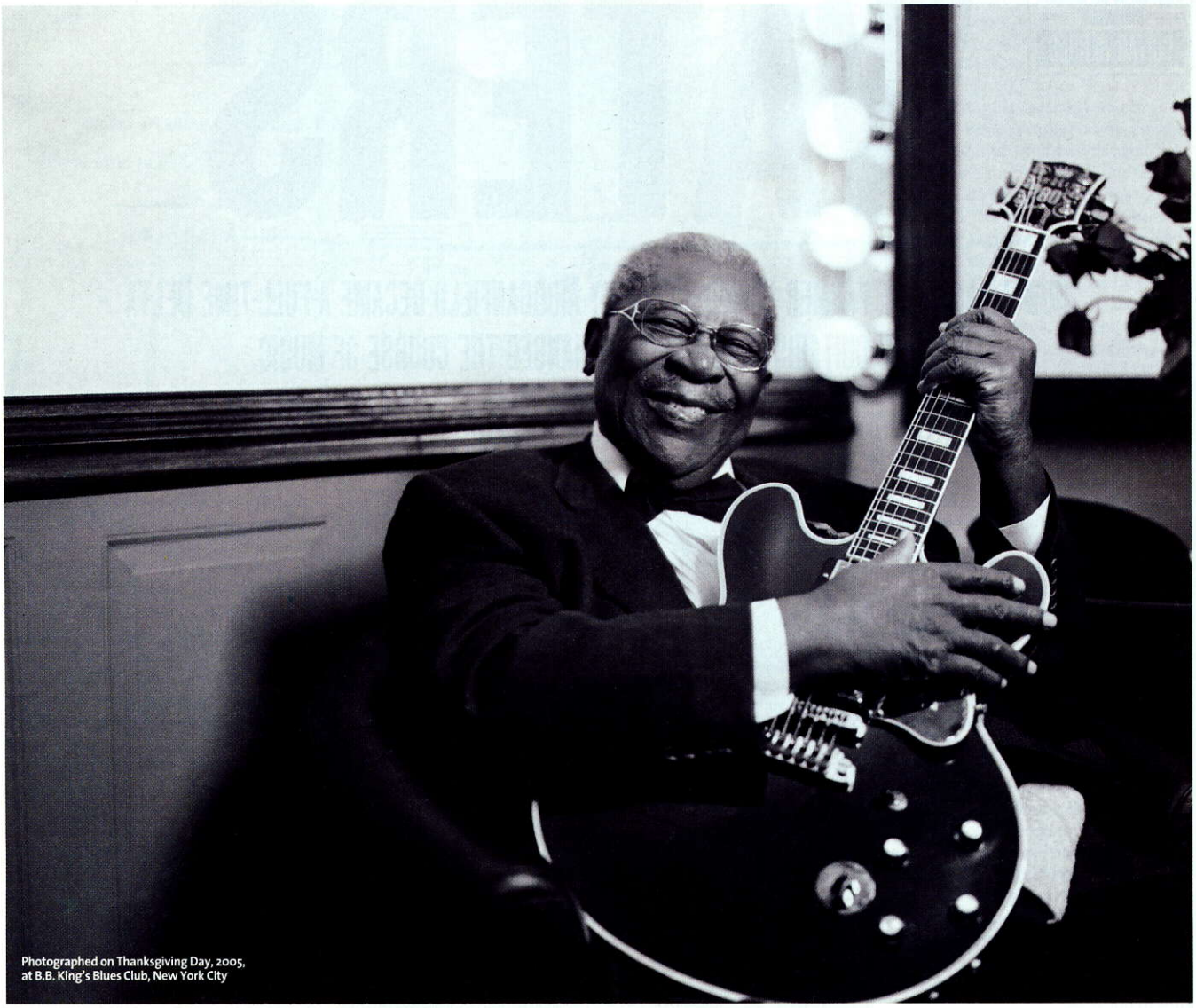
GW Pops Staples recently said, "The Devil ain't got no music. All music is God's music." Would you go along with that?

KING I'm a believer, because I was brought up in church. But a lot of the things that are taught in the Bible, I learned to question some of them. I'm thinking in terms of evolution. A lot of what they teach in the Bible today—versus evolution, I'd go with evolution. I have read too many things that are questions today.

But I really take the 10 Commandments strongly. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." I truly believe that. There are other things I believe too. I'm not an atheist; I do believe. But I think that nowadays it's quite a bit different than it was in the days when I was young.

GW So what has kept you going all these years?

KING Well, I never used drugs. Never have. In my early years I used to drink a lot, but then I come to find out I don't like it. So what the hell was I drinkin' it for? And I worked hard in my early years. I'm a good farmer, and I learned to work with people. I learned about being around people, to try and be as helpful as I could. And that has followed me into what I'm doing now. I'm not a big hell-raiser. I will stand up for what I think is the right thing, and I will speak up when I think it's time to do so. But I'm not a hothead. And I act the same with my band as I do with my family. All I want from them is love and respect. That's all. 'Cause I'll give it back to them. And if they don't give it to me, then they won't get much from me, 'cause I don't pay much attention to them. So everybody, my band, my friends, my family, we get along fine. 'Cause I don't do anything to them that I wouldn't want them to do to me. That's my way of life. **BL**



Photographed on Thanksgiving Day, 2005, at B.B. King's Blues Club, New York City

RAYON RICHARDS

AX MUSEUM
PORTRAITS OF GUITAR HEROES

MUDDY WATERS

How a part-time farmer named McKinley Morganfield became a full-time Delta blues guitarist and forever changed the course of music.

By Keith Wyatt

IF A STATUE OF Muddy Waters big enough to truly reflect the power and range of his influence were ever to be built, it would need one foot in Clarksdale, the other in Chicago, and the head set high enough to be seen from around the globe. In the world of blues, hence rhythm and blues, blues rock, rock, soul, funk and all of the other blues-related subcategories of popular music, Muddy remains a powerful figure more than 15 years after his death. His career spanned massive musical and social transitions, from acoustic to electric, from south to north, and from farm to city. Even if not for his distinctive voice on the guitar, both slide and standard, Muddy would still be remembered as a singer, performer, interpreter, bandleader and all-around inspirational force. He has made a profound difference in our lives.

History and Influences

ON APRIL 4, 1915, IN ROLLING FORK, Mississippi, McKinley Morganfield was born into a world of both grinding material poverty and immeasurable musical promise. Early 20th century Delta farming life was hard and monotonous, played out in the twin shadows of Jim Crow and King Cotton. But there were also jagged, brilliant seeds of creativity starting to flower in a region that was becoming both literally and figuratively a musical crossroads.

Within a few years, McKinley was sent to live with his grandmother on Stovall's Plantation outside Clarksdale, where he soon acquired the nickname "Muddy Waters" from his habit of playing in the farmyard dirt. He showed an early talent for harmonica and guitar, and he was lucky enough to have access to that still-recent invention, the 78-rpm record player. While still a budding player, Muddy found a living mentor in Son House, a spellbinding Delta guitarist and singer with a regional reputation as well as a few recordings of his own.

By the age of 18, Muddy had married and moved out of his grandmother's house into his own cabin on Stovall's. On Saturday nights he turned it into a juke joint, dispensing booze to the locals, providing the music and starting to build his own reputation as a blues singer.

Library of Congress field recorder Alan Lomax found him still living in that joint in 1941. Along with a handful of others, Lomax had been commissioned by the Library to capture for posterity the folk music of America, a project that required toting a 300-pound recording machine to remote, rural locations to document nearly anyone with a musical reputation. The intended goal of this field trip had been to find and record Robert Johnson, who unbeknownst to Lomax was already three years in the grave. Instead, he found himself driving out to Stovall's Plantation, where there was reported to be a guitar picker worth checking out: Muddy Waters.

For years Muddy had been driving tractors by day and playing music on weekends, but when he heard his own voice played back from Lomax' recording machine for the first time, he was finally able to overcome the doubts in his own mind. Now he knew for sure he had the stuff, and he was ready to make it as Muddy Waters, period.

The first step was to get off the farm and get to where there was a better chance of being heard,

PG 42

PETER SIMON / RETNA LTD.

Reprinted from GUITAR WORLD, *MARCH 2000*

FIGURE 1

Open G Tuning (low to high, D G D G B D)

FIGURE 2

Standard Tuning (low to high, E A D G B E)

and of making a real record. In 1943 Muddy finally boarded an Illinois Central train bound for Chicago and left the plantation behind for good. Working by day and playing house parties at night (and switching to electric guitar in the process), Muddy was able to earn good money, but the dream of being a recording star remained distant.

In 1947, pianist Sunnyland Slim, one of Muddy's new musical partners, got him on a session for a new label called Aristocrat, run by a pair of immigrant Polish brothers named Leonard and Phil Chess. The Chess brothers, also looking for a "modern" sound, were not impressed, and another year went by before Muddy's next chance. This time, while warming up before the session, Muddy and bassist "Big" Crawford ran through some material like he had cut for Lomax seven years before—the deep, Delta blues instead of the polished, modern variety. Still skeptical, Leonard took a chance on taping two of the songs, "I Can't Be Satisfied" and "I Feel Like Going Home," and had a few thousand copies pressed. The record hit the stores on Saturday morning, and by 2:00 Saturday afternoon it was sold out. Muddy Waters had arrived.

Over the next few years Muddy refined his electric sound as he worked steadily and continued to record for the rechristened Chess label. He assembled a band that defined the new Chicago blues, including Jimmy Rogers on guitar, Little Walter Jacobs on harmonica and "Baby Face" Leroy Foster on drums. Muddy was a magnet for talent, attracting the cream of musicians not only to his group but also to the Chess label. Besides Walter and Rogers, artists such as pianist Otis Spann, producer/writer/bassist Willy Dixon, Howlin' Wolf, Sonny Boy Williamson and later, James Cotton, Junior Wells and Buddy Guy made Chess the center of the blues universe, and Muddy was the shining star.

Waters' recorded output during the early Fifties reads like tonight's set list for any one of a thousand blues bands: "Rollin' and Tumblin'," "Rolling Stone" (the song that named the band and the magazine), "Hoochie Coochie Man," "I'm Ready," "Got My Mojo Working," "Mannish Boy" and a dozen others. The quality and consistency of these records, often cut three and four in a day, was astonishing, and within a decade young white musicians like the Rolling Stones, Yardbirds, John Mayall and Paul Butterfield were studying his music.

By the mid Sixties, Waters' very identity as the icon of gritty, ghetto blues brought about a complete change in his audience as young blacks turned away, drawn by the more sophisticated styles of soul and Motown, while young whites sought out his "authenticity." A fairly successful 1969 tribute album, *Fathers and Sons*, featured sincere Muddy protégés Mike Bloomfield and Paul Butterfield sitting at his feet just as he had sat by Son House, but other attempts to pander to rock audiences by packaging him with rock stars were disastrous. Although the Johnny Winter–produced records of the Seventies revitalized his career and he could still occasionally put on a captivating show, Muddy began growing into an elder-statesman role, performing mostly while sitting on a stool and letting his road-band sidemen handle the guitars.

After his death in 1983, Muddy the man passed into legend, but through his timeless recordings Muddy the musical force remains.

Style and Technique

MUDDY WATERS LEARNED TO PLAY the guitar Delta-style, meaning he had no formal lessons. He simply had to pick up the instrument, look at and listen to those who could play it better, and start making music as best as he could. Like most players who learned that way, Muddy's guitar style is as unique as his voice and his personality. Rough edges and all, it's him and no one else.

During the mid Forties Muddy made a somewhat half-hearted attempt at smooth, T-Bone Walker-style single-note playing, but Muddy's natural tendencies were more jagged, and it just didn't stick. When he cut "I Just Can't Be Satisfied" for Chess in 1948, he was back to his Delta style but with an electric guitar. Muddy took full advantage of the change in instruments by evolving a new slide guitar sound, swooping up and down the neck, biting into notes and wringing them dizzy on tunes like "Honey Bee," "Canary Bird" and "Walking Blues." To the limited extent that his sound can be noted on the page, **FIGURE 1** shows a typical phrase in open G tuning, Muddy's favorite for slide.

Muddy also capitalized on the sound of the electric in his non-slide playing, combining a thick, distorted bed of rhythm with plucked-and-pulled upper-string accents. **FIGURE 2** shows an example of Muddy's self-accompanied style similar to that on his early Chess recordings. Muddy used a plastic thumb pick to play the low E and bare fingers to play the melody. Attitude counts; cleanliness doesn't.

Gear

BY THE TIME HE STARTED recording in Chicago, Muddy had a Gretsch with a DeArmond pickup. Later, he could be seen playing a Les Paul Goldtop with P90 pickups and finally his trademark instrument, a '57 Telecaster. He tuned to standard pitch for normal playing and to open G tuning (D G D G B D) for slide, and he used heavy strings (.012 or .013 for the high E) and high action. For an amp, he favored the Fender Super Reverb with four 10-inch speakers.

Selected Listening

TO UNDERSTAND MUDDY'S IMPACT, you have to go back to his early Chess recordings, where you'll hear the revelations that inspired Chicago, England and eventually the world. Some good places to start: *The Best of Muddy Waters, His Best: 1947-1955* and *The Chess Box*, which includes a taste of everything from 1947 up to 1972. *The Complete Plantation Recordings* presents Muddy in 1941/42 on the porch at Stovall's, with recorded interviews. *Hard Again* is the Johnny Winter–produced record that revitalized Muddy's career in the Seventies and one of Muddy's own favorites. **BL**

TIME PIECE

BLUES PURIST. GUITAR GOD. POP STAR. ERIC CLAPTON HAS BEEN ALL THESE AND MORE. IN THIS EXHAUSTIVE, WIDE-RANGING INTERVIEW, ROCK'S GREAT SURVIVOR REFLECTS ON HIS TUMULTUOUS JOURNEY.

By DAVID MEAD

PG 44

IN 1994, AFTER 30 YEARS in the business as a blues-influenced rock and roll electric guitarist, Eric Clapton finally got down to the business of recording a blues album of his own. *From the Cradle* was a far cry from the fast-and-loose style of blues tribute tossed off by less-reverent players; it was a collection of authentic blues songs played on instruments from the period and constructed with the loving care of a man who has a reputation for nitpicking perfection in everything he does. Ironically, the album was recorded in the very studio where, as a member of the British group the Yardbirds, Clapton had cut the band's first single, "I Wish You Would." Located in London, England, Olympic Studios has been the site of numerous recordings he has made throughout his long career. The studio made the perfect setting for this 1994 interview in which Clapton reflected upon his past and discussed the guitarists whose work is at the heart of his own.

ERIC CLAPTON I'm recording this album as much as I can with everybody on the floor at the same time—horns and everything. We're trying not to overdub anything at all, so mistakes and everything go in.

GUITAR WORLD A bit like the old Chicago days?

CLAPTON Yes, I suppose so—although I think even *they* overdubbed sometimes. But for the purpose of getting it the way I want it to feel, I want everything live.

GW Can you remember what it was that turned you on to music in the beginning?

CLAPTON Well, the first thing that rang in my head was black music—all black records that were R&B or blues oriented. I remember hearing Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, Big Bill Broonzy, Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley, and not really knowing anything about the geography or culture of the music. But for some reason it did something to me—it resonated. Then I found out later that they were black; they were from the deep South and they were American black men. That started my education.

In fact, the only education I ever really had was finding out about the blues. I took a kind of elementary, fundamental education in art, but it didn't rivet my attention in the same way as blues did. I mean, I wanted to know everything.

I spent all of my mid-to-late teens and early twenties studying the music; studying the geography of it, the chronology of it. The roots, the different regional influences and how everybody interrelated and how

Reprinted from GUITAR WORLD, *DECEMBER 1994*

Clapton in the late Sixties

RALPH CRANE/TIME & LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES

long people lived and how quickly they learned things and how many songs they had of their own and what songs were shared around. I mean, I was just into it, you know? I was learning to play it, as well, and trying to figure out how to apply it to my life. I don't think I took it that seriously as a potential profession, because when you're young, you don't; it was only when other people showed an interest that I realized that I could make a living out of it.

GW What about your choice of instrument? When did you first hear the guitar and think, That's what I want to play?

CLAPTON I think that when I heard early Elvis records and Buddy Holly—when it became clear to me that I was hearing an electric guitar—then I think I wanted to get near it. I was interested in the white rock and rollers until I heard Freddie King; then I was over the moon! I knew that was where I belonged, finally. That was serious, proper guitar playing, and I haven't changed my mind ever since. I still listen to his music in my car, when I'm at home, and I get the same boost from it that I did then.

GW The first guitar of yours was a Hoyer, wasn't it?

CLAPTON Yeah, it was a Hoyer acoustic.

GW Did it have nylon strings or metal?

CLAPTON Funnily enough, it looked like a gut-stringed guitar, but it was steel-stringed. An odd combination.

GW But it wasn't too long before you got your first electric?

CLAPTON I got a Kay double-cutaway. I got one because Alexis Korner had one.

GW That can't have lasted too long either, because by the time you were in the Yardbirds, you were using Telecasters and Gretsches.

CLAPTON It didn't stand up too well. I think the neck bowed, and it didn't seem to me that you could do much about it. It had a truss rod, but it wasn't that effective, and the action ended up being incredibly high. I remember at some point I didn't want it to look like it looked any more, and so I covered it in black Fablon [*vinyl adhesive shelf paper*]! Can you imagine what it sounded like after that? Let alone what it looked like? I ended up with the ES-335TDC and then I got into Fenders. I had a Telecaster and a Jazzmaster.

GW What was it like for you when you started playing in the clubs?

CLAPTON Well, anybody that had any idea of how to play any instrument could just about hold their own, because there was no competition—there was no one around. There was only a handful of bands, and anyone that could play Sam and Dave, Stax and Motown was a master. I came from the blues, and so I had a grasp of that kind of thing; to my reckoning, R&B came from the blues, so I felt I was in some kind of inner sanctum, mentally or spiritually or whatever. If you could play anything in a halfway convincing fashion, you were the boss. If you were pretty good, you could work all the time and you'd get fairly well paid and be successful. It was easy to be successful if you had what was necessary, which was the right musical taste.

GW It's a historical fact that, in the early part of the Sixties, it was practically impossible to get the electric guitar sounds heard on blues records using British-made amps. How did you overcome that?

CLAPTON Just by turning them flat out! I thought the obvious solution was to get an amp and play it as loud as it would go, until it was just about to burst. When I was doing that album with John Mayall [Blues Breakers with Eric Clapton], it was obvious that if you miked the amp too close, it would sound awful. So you had to put the mic a long way away and get the room

> "I WAS ON SOME KIND OF MISSION, SO IN A WAY I THOUGHT, YES, I AM GOD. QUITE RIGHT."

With the Yardbirds (center)

KING COLLECTION / RETNA UK

sound of that amp breaking up.

GW That was when you discovered Marshalls, wasn't it?

CLAPTON Yes.

GW What were you using prior to joining the Bluesbreakers?

CLAPTON I was using Vox AC30s and things like that, but they didn't do it for me. They were too "toppy"; they didn't have any midrange at all.

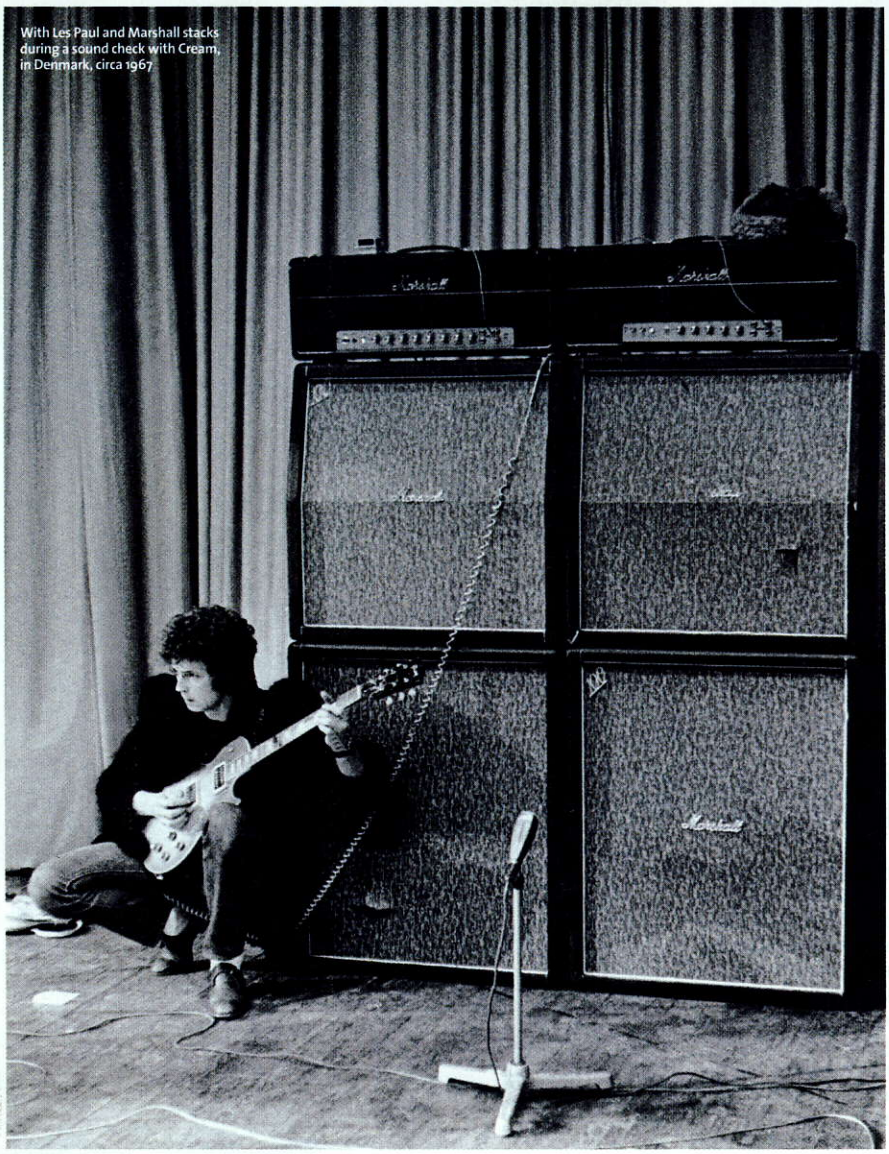
GW Do you harbor any romantic feelings for that period at all? I think it was Mark Knopfler who said that in some ways he misses the old days, where you could show up at a club with an amp and a guitar and just do a gig.

CLAPTON Well, yeah, that's true. Although I don't picture myself doing that these days. It's funny for me now to think of walking into a club and seeing another band play. I do it every now and then and it all comes back to me, and I feel like this is where I belong. I mean, I grew up playing in clubs; that is my spiritual stomping ground. And every time I walk into a club, I feel like I'm going to be asked to play, but I *don't* get asked to play.

Back in the Sixties, if you did go into a club to see someone play, you already knew those people; there was no intimidation, no inhibitions at all. It was just that you hung out with these people and you played with them all the time, so in that respect I miss that camaraderie. There *was* competition, but it was friendly; now I think it's much more aggressive. I went through that [*being a*] "dinosaur" thing 10 years ago, so God knows what it's like for me to show up somewhere now! I don't know what they think of me now if I walk into a club. What do I represent to young players? I have no idea. I don't know where they've gone in their heads now, what they think, what their influences are. It probably has nothing to do with what my contribution was. I have no idea.

GW Let's talk about the whole "Clapton is God" thing. Were you uncomfortable with it?

CLAPTON I thought it was quite justified, to be honest with you! [*laughs*] I suppose I felt that I deserved it for the amount of seriousness that I'd put into it. I was so deadly serious about what I was doing. I thought everyone else was either in it just to be on *Top of the Pops* or to score girls or for some dodgy reason. I was in it to save the fucking world! I wanted to tell the world about blues and to get it right. Even then I thought that I was on some kind of mission, so in a way I thought, Yes, I *am* God. Quite right. My head was huge! I was unbearably arrogant and not a fun person to be around most of the time, because I was just so superior and very judgmental. I didn't have any time for anything that didn't fit into my pattern or scheme of things.



With Les Paul and Marshall stacks during a sound check with Cream, in Denmark, circa 1967

JAN PERSSON / REDFERNS / RETNA

GW Before that time, you'd actually played with Muddy Waters. How did that come about?

CLAPTON I think Mike Vernon [*the producer of* Blues Breakers with Eric Clapton] put the whole thing together. He got Muddy in the studio, and all I can remember is just being incredibly scared, clumsy and overwhelmed, you know? Completely overwhelmed. At that time, the blues thing was going through some funny changes; if you played electric guitar, you'd sold out. Josh White had done a lot of touring in Europe, and Big Bill Broonzy had, too. Josh would go on and do "Down by the Riverside" and "Scarlet Ribbons" and things; it was very middle-of-the-road blues and folk, and it was all acoustic.

Then Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry would tour and they made it palatable; they kind of acquainted everyone with the blues via the acoustic guitar, and so I think when Muddy came over the first time, he brought an electric guitar and it wasn't very well received. So he wasn't everybody's cup of tea. It was only the purists who knew about Chicago blues.

GW It must have been an overwhelming thing for you to play with him, since you were only about 20 at the time.

CLAPTON Yeah, if that. I couldn't take it all in. I felt really stupid because I was a little boy trying to play a man's music, and these were *the* men. They were actually just past their prime, so they'd done it; they'd done what I'm *still* trying to do. I felt really clumsy. I thought I didn't really belong, but I felt very grateful for the opportunity.

GW Everybody assumes you were with the Yardbirds a long time or that you were with the Bluesbreakers a long time, but in actual fact it was a matter of months in both cases.

CLAPTON Yes, I went through all those things very quickly. I mean, Cream was like a year and a half or something, and even with John Mayall, I was only half there. I was *so* unreliable, so irresponsible. I would sometimes just not show up at gigs, and that's how Peter Green would be asked to play—because I was not there. I went to see John last year to actually make amends. I'd been looking back and realized how badly I'd behaved.

GW How does Cream fit into your perspective now? It must have been a very intense 19 months.

CLAPTON It was *very* intense; it actually seems like we were together for three or four years. I think my overall feeling about it now is that it was a glorious mistake. I had a completely different idea of what it would be before I started it, and it ended up being a wonderful thing but nothing like it was meant to be.

GW It was meant to be your band, wasn't it?

CLAPTON It was meant to be a blues trio. I just didn't have the assertiveness to take control. Jack [*Bruce*] and Ginger [*Baker*] were the pow-

erful, dominant personalities in the band; they sort of ran the show and I just played. I just went with the flow in the end and I enjoyed it greatly, but it wasn't anything like I expected it to be at all.

GW In the Cream period, you virtually ran the gamut of Gibsons. You played a Firebird, a 335, Les Pauls, the very famous psychedelic SG. Were there any particular favorites? Apparently, you've still got your 335.

CLAPTON Still got that 335, and I love it. I still get it out every now and then. The 335 was a big favorite, and that particular Firebird—I had some great times on that. The single pickup was a fantastic sound. I think that SG went through the Cream thing just about the longest. It was really a very, very powerful and comfortable instrument because of its lightness and the width and the flatness of the neck. It had a lot going for it—it had the humbuckers; it had everything I wanted at that point.

GW Looking back now, are you able to put your history into context objectively? Are you able to look back at the player you were then and actually think, Yeah, that was okay, or, That was a bit shaky?

CLAPTON Yes, fairly. I think all of it was okay until drugs and drink got involved. I don't think my facility as a player has really gotten much better or worse. I mean, I just finished doing a blues in there, a Freddie King song, and it doesn't sound that much stiffer or that much faster than when I was with John Mayall or Cream—a bit more fluent, a bit more confident maybe. But what's clear to me is that then I was much more in touch with the actual making of music, as I am again now. There was this long bit in between where I was more inclined to just get out of it. At some point toward the end of the Sixties and all the way through the Seventies, I was *out*, you know? I was on holiday, and being a musician was my way of making the money to *be* on holiday.

GW That whole thing started with Jimi Hendrix's death, in a way. The dates are almost coincidental, aren't they?

CLAPTON Yeah. It was funny how that all picked up. The Sixties were great and we were all doing drugs recreationally. It was more like weekend binging: you'd do whatever you were doing, and then you'd get stoned one night or you'd take acid, and then you wouldn't do it again for a while. Then it got to the point where those of us who were addicts by nature just carried on doing it, and we'd do it all the time.

I think we lost the thread then, but—and I suppose this may be a bit presumptuous—it kind of opened the door for punk, because there was no continuity from the musical pattern that evolved in the Sixties. It kind of got scrambled and lost with all the drugs and opened the door for all the anarchy, bitterness and anger. The musicians of the Seventies didn't really have a very clear legacy. The legacy got very fucked and very self-indulgent. I think that the whole thing about the Sex Pistols was that they were really pissed off at our indulgence—the indulgence and that self-righteous stance of the Sixties.

GW Jimi actually jammed with Cream, didn't he?

CLAPTON Yes. First time I ever met him, we were playing at the Central London Polytechnic, and Jimi came along with [*his manager*] Chas Chandler. I don't know how long he'd been in England, maybe a couple of days, but he got up and played. He was doing Howlin' Wolf songs, and I couldn't believe this guy. I couldn't believe it. Part of me wanted to run away and say, "Oh, now this is what *I* want to be—I can't handle this." And part of me just fell in love. It was a really difficult thing for me to deal with, but I just had to surrender and say, "This is fantastic."

GW You became good friends, didn't you?

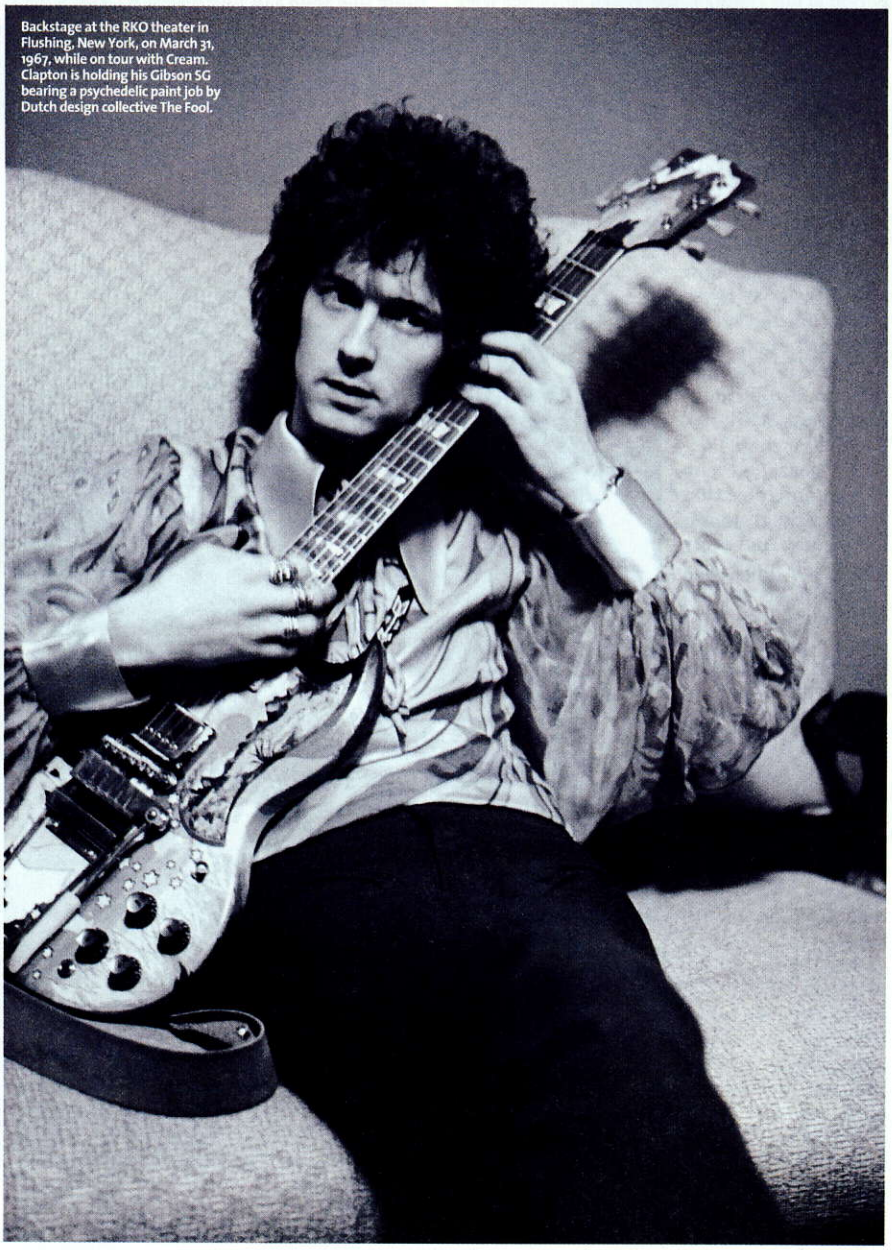
CLAPTON Oh yeah, instantly, instantly.

GW I don't think people realize how much of a blues player Hendrix was. In a lot of ways it's obvious now, but in those days it didn't seem to come into it.

CLAPTON No, I know. I think a lot of people thought, Oh yeah, the Band of Gypsys thing was the best. Or they look at different eras of his music making in terms of his "peak" or his "most prolific" or his "most creative" periods. But the core of all his playing was blues, and what really used to upset him the most was that he got this fixation about selling out. He got very down on himself and very cynical about his acceptance. He thought he was going commercial all the time, and yet he couldn't stop himself, in a way.

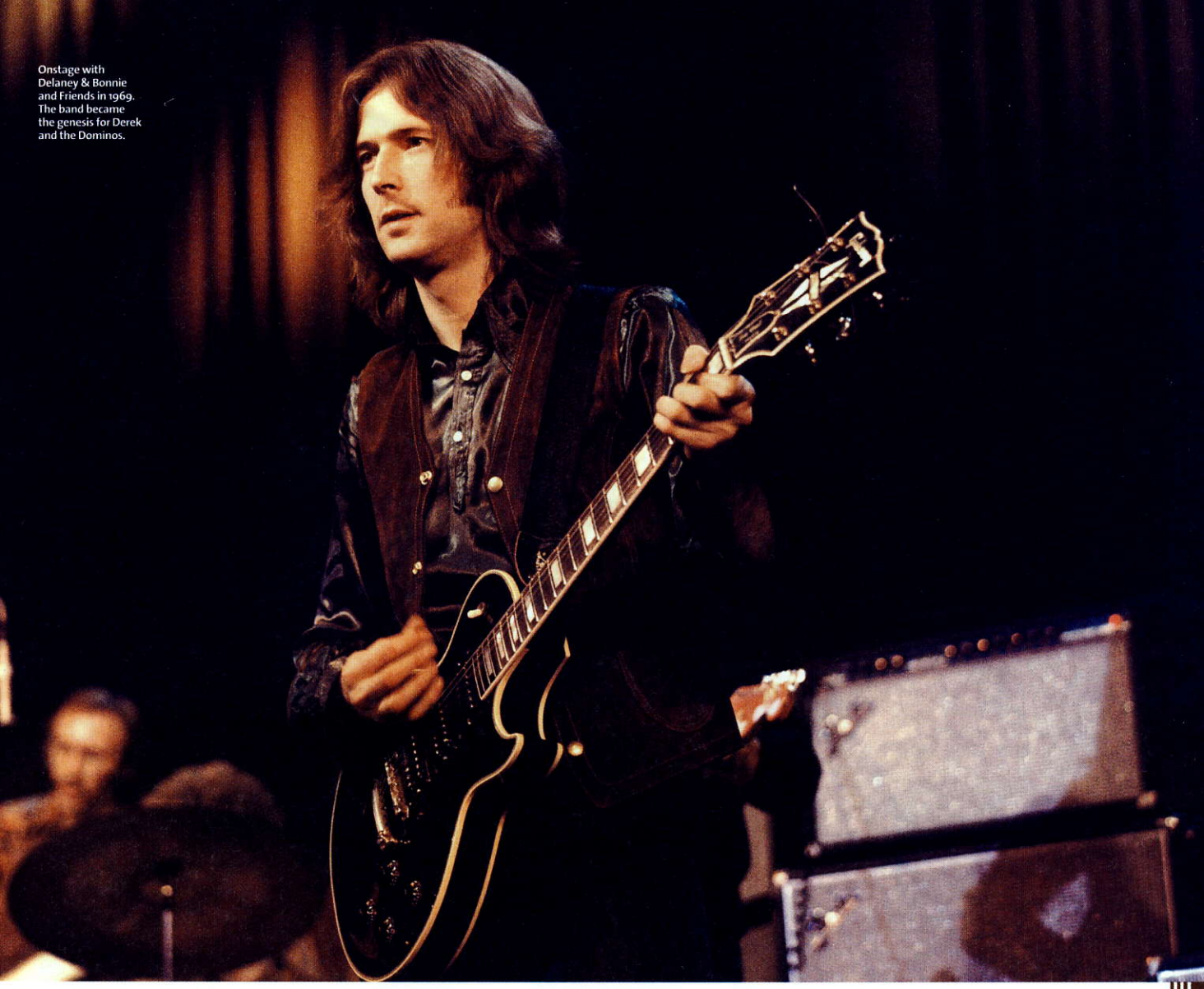
GW You've recorded Jimi's "Stone Free" and "Little Wing" in the past. Why haven't you recorded more of his songs, seeing as you were so close?

CLAPTON I got very jealous of Jimi. I was very possessive about him when he was alive, and when he died I was very angry and got even more possessive. If people talked to me about Hendrix, I would just turn away; I wasn't interested in their perception of Hendrix because I felt like they were talking about an ex-girlfriend, or a brother who had died. I just thought, I'm not talking to you about it; I knew him and he was very dear to me, and it's very painful to hear you talk about him as if you knew him—you fucking didn't!



Backstage at the RKO theater in Flushing, New York, on March 31, 1967, while on tour with Cream. Clapton is holding his Gibson SG bearing a psychedelic paint job by Dutch design collective The Fool.

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES



Onstage with Delaney & Bonnie and Friends in 1969. The band became the genesis for Derek and the Dominos.

JAN PERSSON / REDFERNS / RETNA

"IF PEOPLE TALKED TO ME ABOUT HENDRIX, I WOULD JUST TURN AWAY. I FELT LIKE THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT AN EX-GIRLFRIEND, OR A BROTHER WHO HAD DIED."

I didn't want anything to do with it. It's taken me all of this time to heal. I don't know how long the grieving process is, but in my experience, it's a fucking long time.

GW Why did you choose to record "Stone Free" for the 1993 Hendrix tribute album, *Stone Free*?

CLAPTON Well, the thing with "Stone Free" is that when Jimi first played it to me, he told me that it was the one he wanted as the A-side instead of "Hey Joe." To me, it was better than "Hey Joe." When I heard "Stone Free," it blew my fucking mind! And I thought, They're going to put "Hey Joe" out because it's commercial, but he wanted "Stone Free." And it was the first recorded thing that I'd heard of his, and so that was the connection to our friendship.

GW Was your switching to Strats around the time of Jimi's death a conscious tribute to him on your part?

CLAPTON Yes, I think it was. Once he wasn't there any more, I felt like there was room to pick it up. Then I saw Steve Winwood playing one, and something about that really did it for me. I'd always worshipped Steve, and whenever he made a move, I would be right on it. I gave great weight to his decisions, because to me he was one of the few people in England who had his finger on some kind of universal musical pulse. I went to see him at the Marquee, and he was playing a white-necked Strat, and there was something about it.

GW When did you start playing slide?

CLAPTON I've always played slide—not electric—but I played slide when I was playing acoustic in the pubs. I tried to play like Furry Lewis and the more primitive rural blues musicians, and I also tried to be a little bit like Muddy. Then it sort of went to one side, but it's always come and gone; I've never really stuck very hard at it. I do love it, but somehow or another it doesn't have the madness. When I got into Buddy Guy, there was something about the madness of his playing that I fell in love with. It was like someone jabbing you with their forefinger. It was the staccato madness of it, which you can't do on slide.

GW Was Duane Allman an influence on your slide playing?

CLAPTON Yes, very much so.

GW The story of your meeting has it that you just went to see him in concert.

CLAPTON Well, we'd started the Derek and the Dominos album and we hadn't really got very far. I'd written some songs and we had played gigs—some touring in England—and we'd got a kind of persona. But in the studio, it was very one-dimensional, and it didn't feel like we were getting anywhere. There was a bit of frustration in the air. [*Producer*] Tom Dowd has always been

Onstage in Philadelphia in 1975

a very clever mixer of people; he's always been a great one for being a catalyst and putting different combinations of musicians together to get an effect. I don't know whether he saw an end result or not, but I think he just wanted me to see Duane. In fact, I'd been talking about Duane, because I'd heard him play on Wilson Pickett's recording of "Hey Jude," and I kept asking people who he was. So Tom took me and all the rest of the Dominos to see the Allman Brothers play in Coconut Grove and introduced us.

I said, "Let's hang out. Come back to the studio." I wanted Duane to hear what we'd done. We just jammed and hung out, got drunk and did a few drugs. He just came in the studio and I kept him there! I kept thinking up ways to keep him in the room: "We could do this. Do you know this one?" Of course he knew *everything* that I would say, and we'd just do it. A lot of those things, like "Key to the Highway" or "Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out" are first or second takes. Then I'd quickly think of something else to keep him there. I knew that sooner or later he was going to go back to the Allmans, but I wanted to steal him! I tried, and he actually came on a few gigs, too. But then he had to say, almost like a woman, "Well, you know, I am actually married to this band and I can't stay with you." I was really quite heartbroken! I'd got really used to him, and after that I felt like I had to have another guitar player. I had Neal Schon come in for a little while, having met him through Carlos Santana, but by that time we were getting really fucked up and the band was on its way out.

"DEREK AND THE DOMINOS WERE RECORDING IN HERE WHEN WE BROKE UP AND I WENT INTO THAT DARK PLACE. I DIDN'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT THE MUSIC ANYMORE."

GW That was the beginning of your dark period, wasn't it?

CLAPTON I don't know whether it can be fairly placed at the door of drugs or relationships or life issues as much as I just had to get away. I had been doing so much. I'd been out there for a long time, playing and playing, with no break. I do that a lot; I work quite hard—I always have. And at that point, for some reason, a combination of things put me into a kind of retirement that I needed.

I remember at the end of that period that I was starting to fall back in love with music. I remember listening to music very hard and wanting to play very much, but I had to get off the scene to get that enthusiasm back. Because I'd lost it.

Derek and the Dominos were recording in here when we broke up and I went into that dark place. I didn't give a shit about the music anymore. We'd come in and just argue all day and have a go at one another, and then one of us would blow up and split. The music didn't matter. I didn't like the sound of my guitar, I didn't like the way I played, and it took me a while to go away and come back to it. When I came back,

MICHAEL PUTLAND / RETNA LTD.

it was with a different point of view, a fresh enthusiasm and a kind of open-mindedness to learn about new music, because that's when I heard reggae. I was just like a kid in a sweet shop again.

GW You toured a hell of a lot throughout the Seventies.

CLAPTON Toured and recorded and got out of it! I had a great time, but it was all fairly directionless. I mean, I don't regret any of it, to be honest; I think there was no other way for me to go, in a way. I'm just very grateful that I survived it and didn't die, because I was often in some very seriously dangerous situations with booze and drugs. I used to do crazy things that people would bail me out of, where I was risking life and limb in cars or in different life-threatening situations. And I'm just grateful that I survived. But the music got very lost; I didn't know where I was going and I didn't really care. I was more into just having a good time, and I think it showed. I think I got fairly irresponsible, and there were some people that liked it and other people that got very pissed off.

And my guitar playing took a back seat. I'd gotten fed up with that thing about "The Legend"—I wanted to be something else and I wasn't really sure what that was. I was just latching onto people and trying to be like them, to see if something else would emerge. And all that *did* emerge, in the long run, is what I am now. I don't really know what that is as a definition except it's more in tune with what I was at the beginning—which is a blues musician.

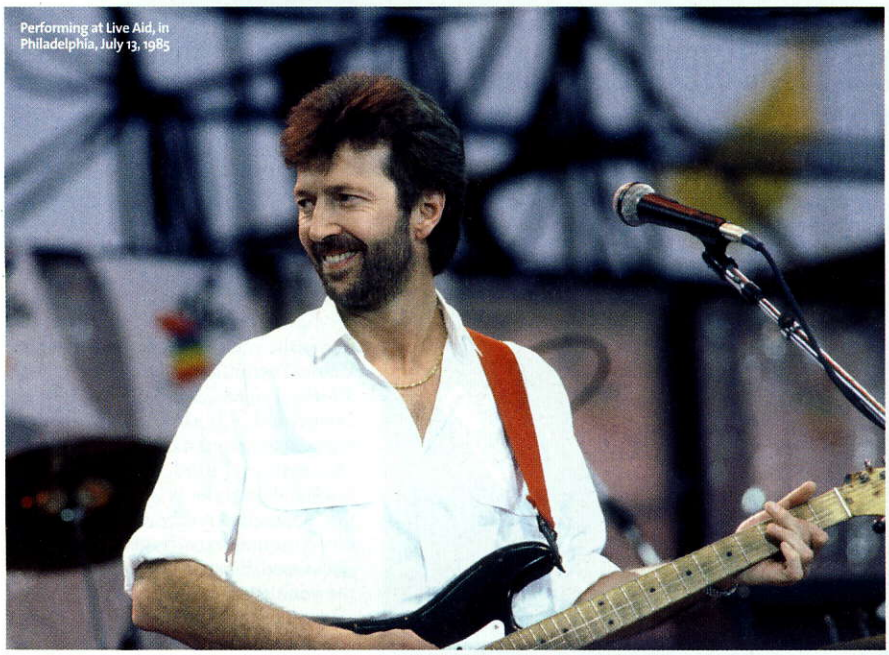
GW It has been said of those days that nobody could actually predict what any given Eric Clapton concert was going to be like.

CLAPTON It would depend very much on who I'd bumped into that day—who had managed to corner my attention—because then I'd just go off with them. I was just like a grass in the wind: I went anywhere. I was literally anybody's, depending on what they were holding—you know, what drug or what drink they were on. Then there'd be the gig in the evening, and I'd be wherever that was, wherever I'd been taken.

GW That period ended dramatically around 1984-1985. Suddenly, there were projects like *Edge of Darkness* and the Roger Waters album *The Pros and Cons of Hitch Hiking*, which saw you playing with much more fire and power. But it was probably Live Aid that was responsible for reestablishing you in many people's minds. Did the reaction you received surprise you?

CLAPTON Yeah! I'm not sure I was even able to take it all in. I've always been a very, very self-effacing or low-self-worth sort of person. When they told me where I was going to be on the bill, I didn't get it. I thought, What? Really? And that really did a lot for me. And that reception—it was mind blowing! From that point on, I stared to give myself a bit more of a pat on the back and to be kind to myself.

GW Did the multiple Grammys for *Unplugged* take you by surprise?



Performing at Live Aid, in Philadelphia, July 13, 1985

PAUL NATKIN / WIREIMAGE / GETTY IMAGES

CLAPTON Yeah, I must admit I found it all a bit overblown. I mean, I thought the album was quite rough, to say the least. I think most of the recognition and applause was wrapped up in another gesture—which is beautiful and I don't want to put that down at all. I appreciate all of it, but I felt it was all a little bit blown out of proportion. And frightening. If I'd taken it too seriously, it could have done me in.

GW There have been lots of books written about you. What do you think of them?

CLAPTON I think they all take it far too seriously. It's a bit like the "Clapton is God" thing; they all follow on from that. *Survivor* [*Ray Coleman's 1993 authorized biography*] has got a hint of that. It's all a bit reverent, isn't it? I don't really see myself as being that heroic. I was just lucky to be in the right place at the right time and very fortunate to have survived. So I am a survivor, but it all ought to be taken a little less seriously, I feel.

I think if it's due to anything, it's just the fact that I'm fairly honest about what I do. I just try to do the best and carry on working, and do it as simply and unaffectedly as possible. I'm not bullshitting people: all I really want to do is to play with dignity and self-respect. I'm making a blues album because things have come full circle. It's been 30 years and I'm doing what I've always wanted to do. I'm fulfilling myself for other people too, because I've always been badgered about this. People are always saying, "When are you going to do this blues album that you're always on about?" And I'm doing it! It then frees me up, opens the door for whatever's next, and it will be interesting to see what that is going to be,

GW How did you go about choosing the track for this record?

CLAPTON Well, they're just the songs that I've always loved out of my record collection: blues masterpieces that have had some kind of profound effect on me, like the Jimmy Rogers song "Blues All Day Long." There's something about that: the balance of the instruments and the way it's recorded. The beauty and the strength of it have always taken my breath away and always will. I don't do it quite the same way, but what I'm trying to recreate is the emotional experience that I got when I heard it. There was something about all of those songs that took me to some beautiful place and made me feel better or gave me cold chills when I heard them, so I'd try to make that happen again by playing them.

GW Do you think there are any modern blues songs written today which do the same kind of thing?

CLAPTON Yeah, oh yeah. In fact, I would like to do a couple of Robert Cray's songs. He's the last of the great heroes, I think. A great singer, writer and player, too.

GW Have you got any advice for guitar players?

CLAPTON Listen to the past. I've run into a lot of players in the past 10 or 15 years who didn't really know where it was coming from. They thought it came from Jimmy Page or Jeff Beck, or they thought it came from Buddy Guy or B.B. King. Well, it comes from further back, and if you go back and listen to Robert Johnson and Blind Blake and Blind Boy Fuller and Blind Willie Johnson and Blind Willie McTell, there's thousands of them that all have something that led to where it is now. The beauty of it is that you can take one of those things and make it *yours*. But by learning too much from the later players, you don't have that much opportunity to make something original.

I listened to [*New Orleans trumpet player*] King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton, Thelonious Monk, Charles Mingus, John Coltrane and Archie Shepp. I listened to everything I could that came from that place that they call "the blues" but in form isn't necessarily the blues.

GW A lot of those guys are jazz players.

CLAPTON They are, but they all would acknowledge that if you can't play the blues, you can't play jazz anyway. So listen, listen, listen, and go as far back as you dare.

GW Finally, you once said you had two ambitions in life: one was to play one note in a blues solo that could bring an audience to the verge of tears, and the other was to sleep with 10,000 women. Have you...

CLAPTON No—and I haven't slept with 10,000 women either. Still got both of them to do...if I live that long. **BL**

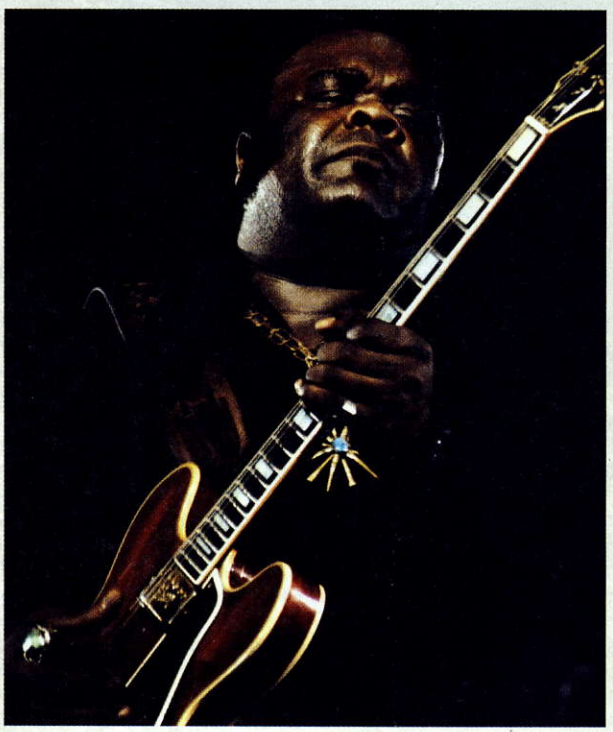
AX MUSEUM
PORTRAITS OF GUITAR HEROES

FREDDIE KING

LONG BEFORE SUCH LONE STAR LEGENDS AS STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN AND BILLY GIBBONS PLAYED THEIR FIRST LICKS, FREDDIE KING WAS SHOWING THE WORLD HOW TO RIP IT UP TEXAS-STYLE.

By KEITH WYATT

FREDDIE KING, THE "Texas Cannonball," was large and powerful in stature, sound and influence. Although he shared his surname with guitarists B.B. and Albert King, Freddie carved out his own distinct territory as a modern electric-blues guitar stylist. Sculpting his country roots and aggressive, inventive phrasing into classic guitar instrumentals such as "Hide Away" and ballads like "Have You Ever Loved a Woman," Freddie King was one of the few urban bluesmen who brought the electric guitar into the modern world.



HISTORY AND INFLUENCES

FREDDIE (HIS NAME HAS sometimes been spelled "Freddy") was born in 1934 on a farm outside the east Texas town of Gilmer. His stepmother and uncle were both guitar players who schooled him in the basics of playing the instrument. Like most youngsters playing country-blues guitar in Texas in the Forties, King grew up under the pervasive influence of Blind Lemon Jefferson and Lightning Hopkins. In addition to their influences, King picked up his electric "uptown" blues style from his idol Louis Jordan, a jump-blues saxophonist and singer whose lighthearted, sophisticated blues style dominated the black-music airwaves in the mid Forties.

King moved with his family to Chicago in 1950, right in the middle of the golden age of Chicago blues. He was already familiar with the recordings of Chicago giants Muddy Waters and Jimmy Reed. Now, however, he could see these players perform up-close. King soon fell under the spell of Reed's accompanist, Eddie Taylor, and Waters' guitarists, Jimmy Rogers and Robert "Junior" Lockwood. All three players were adept at the electrified blend of rhythm and melody found in the Chicago-blues guitar style. It was an approach that dovetailed nicely with King's own down-home, bare-fingers approach. Lockwood, in particular, was helpful to the youngster. He had absorbed some of the harmonic sophistication of jazz and showed King a few adventurous chord voicings.

Within a year, the teenaged King had his first electric guitar and began to earn cash as a sideman. He was also working with a group of his own, the Every Hour Blues Boys, and by the middle of the decade he was playing on sessions for the Parrot and Chess labels. His first single under his own name, "Country Boy," was cut in 1957 for the El-Bee label. Although it failed to click with listeners, King was beginning to cement his reputation as a singer and player. After seven years of working in the steel mills and clubs, he was able to quit his day job and work exclusively as a musician. He had also begun to find his own identity as a guitar stylist, crafting a cohesive sound that combined his Texas country roots with the hard-knock experience he gained in Chicago barrooms and B.B. King–influenced single-string finesse. King's break came in 1960 when Chicago guitarist Syl Johnson introduced him to Sonny Thompson, A&R representative for King Records.

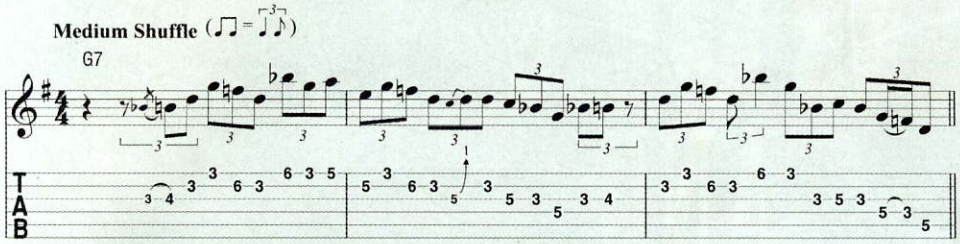
Located in Cincinnati, Ohio, the King label was the Midwest's largest independent black music producer,

PG 52

ROSE / DALLE / RETNA LTD.

FIGURE 1 "The Stumble"

FIGURE 2 "Side Tracked"



second only to Chicago-based Chess Records. Sonny Thompson was also the label's house bandleader, producer, arranger and pianist, and he framed King in a tight, professional setting that put the spotlight squarely on his vocals and guitar. The first single, "You've Got to Love Her with a Feeling" (released, like most of King's work, on the label's Federal subsidiary), was a minor hit, and King followed it with a similar vocal ballad, 1961's "I Love the Woman." To everyone's surprise, it was that record's B-side, a guitar instrumental called "Hide Away" that caught fire and made Freddie King a national star.

In 1961, following the song's success, Federal released King's first album, *Freddy King Sings*, which showcased his stellar vocals on "Have You Ever Loved a Woman," "Lonesome Whistle Blues" and "I'm Tore Down." The same year, King went back into the studio and cut 11 more instrumentals which, together with "Hide Away," were released as *Let's Hide Away and Dance Away with Freddy King*. "Sen-Sa-Shun," "Side Tracked," "The Stumble," "San-Ho-Zay" and "Just Pickin' "—each one a classic—were cut in a single day and, except for "Hide Away" and "Just Pickin'," were named by label executives. King had the knack for defining a simple, catchy melody (often based on a well-known vocal tune), knocking out a riveting solo, returning to the melody and wrapping it all up in under three minutes.

By 1963, King was financially stable, and bought a house in Dallas. His reputation among white audiences was just starting to build, mainly through covers of his tunes performed by British guitarists like Eric Clapton, Mick Taylor and Peter Green. Clapton in particular was taken by King's inventive and energetic phrasing, and aside from his late-Sixties fling with Albert King–isms, he touted Freddie King's influence more than that of any other single player.

In 1968, King jumped to the Atlantic-Cotillion label. Thanks to European tours and his growing reputation on the college and festival circuits, his career was humming. His recordings began to show more sheen than grit, but his live sound continued to be loud and aggressive, and he burned more than a few blues-rock guitar heroes during onstage duels.

Unlike the many blues musicians whose careers began to suffer in the mid Seventies, King continued to work steadily. Perhaps no one was prepared for the shock when, on December 28, 1976, he died suddenly of ulcers and heart failure at only 42 years of age.

Style and Technique

LIKE MOST YOUNG PLAYERS raised on country blues, King began as a bare-fingered picker, although he eschewed the open-tuning-and-capo style of Texas contemporary Albert Collins for a more standard guitar setup. After arriving in Chicago and closely observing Jimmy Rogers, Muddy Waters and Eddie Taylor, King followed their examples and started using a plastic thumb pick along with a metal fingerpick on his index finger. He also learned to dampen the strings with the heel of his picking hand, which allowed him to play loud while maintaining control of his dynamics. This combination of biting, metallic tone on the high strings and muted tones on the low strings became his trademark sound.

King's overall approach might be described as "uptown Chicago," combining as it did the rhythm-based, electrified Delta style of Jimmy Rogers and Eddie Taylor with the single-note melodic approach of T-Bone Walker and B.B. King. A brief sampler of different phrases from King's repertoire shows his various influences.

FIGURE 1, an excerpt from 1960's "The Stumble," is a melodic phrase played over the last four bars of a 12-bar blues in E. This example illustrates the strong Jimmy Rogers influence on King's style. Notice how he covers the neck from 12th fret to open position. More than most of his contemporaries, King made effective use of the entire fretboard.

FIGURE 2 shows an example of King's single-note phrasing from "Side Tracked," another 1960 instrumental. In this phrase, the influence of T-Bone Walker is seen in the continuous, linear melody, but King attacked the notes much more aggressively than the relaxed, swinging Walker.

The classic stop-chorus break from "Hide Away" (shown on page 74 in section E, bars 49–52) is a great example of King's sophisticated harmonic sense and fretboard knowledge. The jazzy E9 chord is a voicing that King learned from Robert Lockwood. The descending sixth intervals are played with pick and finger (or, in King's case, thumb pick and fingerpick). Play it slowly until you have it entirely memorized. To play it at tempo, you'll need to be on automatic pilot.

Today, B.B. and Albert King are the two most-cited "Kings" of blues, but Freddie King stood as their equal, earning his place squarely between the first generation of swing-based electric guitarists and the blues-rock tidal wave that followed. King showed his disciples how to fill the airy cavities of a blues phrase with raw energy, and how to turn a handful of licks into a piece of real music. It's a lesson that bears repeating.

Gear

KING PLAYED ACOUSTIC guitars until he received his first Kay electric at age 17. But the guitar he used on all of his recordings until 1965 was a 1954 Les Paul Goldtop with single-coil P90 pickups. In '65 he switched to the semihollow, stereo Gibson ES-345 with humbucking pickups, and later he played the stereo ES-355. The semihollow guitars had a fuller sound due to their size, shape and electronics, but King's biting attack remained part of his identity, no matter what the guitar.

For amps, King liked 'em loud, and none was louder at the time than the Fender Dual Showman. Later, he used the Fender Quad Reverb, a massive 4x12, 300-watt combo also favored by Albert Collins. As for effects, nothing other than reverb was a consideration for players of that era.

Selected Listening

THE CORE OF FREDDIE KING'S legacy was cut during his initial 1960-'61 period on Federal. He was a very consistent player and singer throughout his career, but as the production style and material changed, much of his later output became less emotionally arresting. Some suggestions include *Just Pickin'*, *Freddie King Sings* and *Hide Away: The Best of Freddie King*. **BL**

THE STUMBLE Music by Freddie King and Sonny Thompson. Copyright © 1962 by Fort Knox Music Inc. and Trio Music Company. Copyright Renewed and Assigned to Fort Knox Music Inc., Trio Music Company, Carbert Music Inc. and Arc Music Corporation (BMI) in the United States. All Rights for the World excluding the United States Controlled by Fort Knox Music Inc. and Trio Music Company. International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission. Reprinted by Permission of Hal Leonard Corporation

SIDE TRACKED Words and Music by Freddie King and Sonny Thompson. Copyright © 1962 by Fort Knox Music Inc. and Trio Music Company. Copyright Renewed and Assigned to Fort Knox Music Inc., Trio Music Company, Carbert Music Inc. and Arc. Music Corporation (BMI) in the United States. All Rights for the World excluding the United States Controlled by Fort Knox Music Inc. and Trio Music Company. International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission. Reprinted by Permission of Hal Leonard Corporation

OF WOLF AND MAN

AS HOWLIN' WOLF'S GUITARIST, HUBERT SUMLIN CONTRIBUTED TO SOME OF THE GREATEST BLUES SIDES EVER RECORDED. THE WOLF'S BEEN DEAD FOR 33 YEARS, BUT SUMLIN'S STILL HOWLIN'.

By ALAN PAUL

PG 54

FEW MUSICAL MARRIAGES have been so magical, so intuitively *right*, as that of the great blues singer Howlin' Wolf and his guitarist, Hubert Sumlin. From the time he joined the blues legend's band in 1954 until Wolf's death in 1976, Sumlin played a central role in crafting some of the century's most memorable and influential American roots music. His economical, stinging fills, unusual rhythmic approach and perfectly placed bent notes are as integral as Wolf's growl to the blues power of classics like "Spoonful," "Smokestack Lightnin'," "Killing Floor" and "The Red Rooster."

Blues and rock guitarists who cut and bloodied their teeth on Howlin' Wolf tunes were heavily influenced by Sumlin: Hendrix often covered "Killing Floor"; the Rolling Stones, Clapton and countless lesser blues-rock lights continue to play "The Red Rooster"; the Doors remade "Back Door Man" in their own image; *The Sky Is Crying*, a 1991 collection of Stevie Ray Vaughan outtakes, includes the late guitarist's version of "May I Have a Talk with You"; and Page, Clapton and Beck each flattered Sumlin by imitating him on "Spoonful" and "Smokestack Lightnin'."

Sumlin backed Howlin' Wolf for 23 years, a stretch broken only by six months in 1956 when he worked for Wolf's arch rival, Muddy Waters. After Wolf's death, Sumlin launched his long-delayed solo career, becoming a Chicago blues club fixture and making occasional festival appearances. Over the past 15 years, however, he has picked up steam, touring often and recording numerous albums. Sumlin, now 77, was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame in 2008 and still enjoys performing around the world

GUITAR WORLD Did Howlin' Wolf explicitly tell you what to play?

HUBERT SUMLIN Not really. When I first got with him, he told me that I wasn't ready to play his music, so I should go home and think about it for a day, a week, a month or a year, whatever it took. "Come back when you're ready," he said. "When you figure out how to play my stuff, then you're hired." I went home and prayed and slept with my guitar under my pillow trying to figure something out, because I knew that this man was serious. Wolf did not bullshit.

I had played with a pick for eight or nine years, and I couldn't put it down. Then I woke up one morning and started playing without a pick, and the first thing I thought of was "Smokestack Lightnin'." I played it better than I ever had and realized I don't need no pick. I don't need anything but

Reprinted from GUITAR LEGENDS: BLUES POWER, *1994*

JAMES PATRICK COOPER / RETNA LTD.

Photographed in
New York City, 2001

my fingers. And that was it. I started playing with a lot more soul. I never used a pick again. My tone, my sound, everything happened right then. People can't understand how I play. The average guitar player don't know what I'm doing. But it's my thing. It's what God gave me; I don't need a pick because I got five fingers. How can one pick compete?

GW One unusual aspect of your style is that you don't play a lot of chords.

SUMLIN No, I don't, but I play a lot of tricks. Like Muddy Waters once said, I've got a lot of gimmicks up my sleeves. I know when to get in and when to get out. Lots of guitarists just miss out on that aspect of playing. I know how and where to put it, which is what it's all about.

GW Did many of your personal playing trademarks develop as a result of playing with Howlin' Wolf for so long?

SUMLIN Yes and no. I also played with Muddy Waters for six months and, Lord, I learned a lot from Jimmy Rogers [*Waters' lead guitarist*]. I picked up from every guitarist I ever worked with. I'd take a note from here and a note from here, a lick from him and a lick from him, and put it all together. That's the Hubert Sumlin style. And that's what I would recommend any guitarist do: listen to players you like and pick things up from everyone and everywhere.

You have to learn how to use your instrument to its fullest. You got five different Es, you got five different As, and you got to use them all. If you're all over the neck, you're better. That's why I never used a clamp [*capo*] like Muddy or Albert Collins or Jimmy Rogers: Why limit yourself? You'll notice that kids coming up today play great, and they don't use a clamp because they've got better knowledge of the instrument.

GW There's one element of your background that's almost unique among bluesmen: you studied guitar at the Chicago Conservatory of Music. What was the extent of your formal training?

SUMLIN I studied for six months with this old guy who was with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. It was the first time I ever saw a dude who played both opera and blues on his guitar. It had a huge impact on me, because I didn't know the piano keyboard and I didn't know how to read—I didn't know an F from an A, an A from a B or a B from a C. That guy showed me so much in six months.

GW Even though you always played electric guitar with Wolf, your sound often had a bit of a country blues vibe. Is that where you come from, musically?

SUMLIN Actually, when I was a kid I wanted to be a jazz player like Charlie Christian more than anything, but I also loved and heard the blues. [*Those players*] were all around me, and at a certain point, I realized how great all these dudes I listened to were: Charley Patton, Lonnie Johnson, Robert Johnson...all those guys. Peetie Wheatstraw—the "devil's son-in-law"—Jesus, man, he was something! Then when I got with Wolf and Muddy I realized that they actually played with these guys, and that blew my mind. I tried to ask Wolf about Charley Patton, and he said, "Aw, you young punk, you're too young to understand." It always hurt me that I missed out on seeing and playing with those old guys, because they wrote the book that Wolf and Muddy electrified and expanded.

GW It sounds like Wolf was very conscious of the age difference between you two.

SUMLIN Yeah. He told me one time, a couple of years before he died, that he was "40 years too early." He said, "I plowed mules barefoot in December, with snow on the ground, the dirt frozen as a rock." I said, "Don't lie, man." And he said, "I'm not lying. I'm 40 years too early. Things are getting better all the time." The next year he got sick and went on a kidney dialysis machine.

GW It can be said that you are the link between the Delta bluesmen and rock and roll. On the one hand, you played with Wolf, who was a contemporary of Robert Johnson and the other guys you mentioned. At the same time, you also exerted a huge influence on the next generation—rock guitarists who weren't really all that much younger than you.

SUMLIN I'm very proud of that, and I got to meet those guys. I met Eric Clapton in 1970 when I played on Wolf's *London Sessions*. I wasn't supposed to be there, but Clapton said, "If Hubert's not there, I don't record." Then Wolf said he couldn't record without me, so they had to bring me. Wolf was on a dialysis machine right in the studio, with doctors tending him night and day. He was so sick that on a couple of nights we

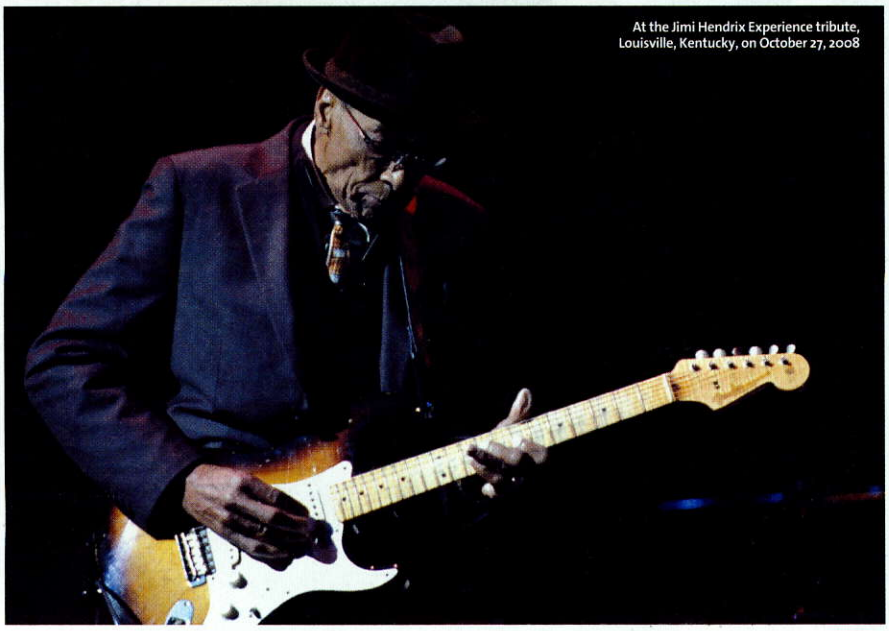
Onstage circa 1970

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES / GETTY IMAGES

didn't even record; we just sat in the studio and got high. Mick Jagger and Bill Wyman came in, and we partied all night long, man. The cleaning lady came in the next morning and everyone was laying there on the floor. Mick Jagger had his head up inside the bass drum. [*laughs*]

GW Did you spend much time with Clapton?

SUMLIN Yes. One day, Eric sent a limousine for me, and we drove for 30 or 40 miles outside of London to his big old mansion in the country. A gorgeous place, like a castle. We had a beautiful dinner, then he took me down to the basement, where he had all these guitars. It looked like a factory: three and a half walls of a room lined with every kind of guitar you can imagine.



At the Jimi Hendrix Experience tribute, Louisville, Kentucky, on October 27, 2008

He said, "Pick out a couple of those guitars, Hubert. I'm giving you two of them." I walked all the way around the room, looking at every one of them. Then I saw this case sitting in the middle of the room. I opened the case and took out this beautiful Fender Stratocaster and started playing it there, sitting on the floor.

He said, "Hey, man, I told you to pick any two you want from those that are up against the wall." I said, "I know, but this Fender sure sounds good. Is it your regular?" He said, "It sure is." I said, "I knew it, because that's the one." He said, "You mean to say you're going to take it from me, man?" I said, "No, I can't do it. I don't want none of these." He said, "Take it, man. At least I know it's got a good home. Just promise me that if I ever want it back you'll give it to me."

I kept it for two years and hardly ever played it. Then we were both at the Montreaux Jazz Festival, and I brought it over to him. He asked me how much money I wanted, if there was anything I needed. I said, "Nothing man, it's your guitar. Don't embarrass me." He just gave me a hug. He's a nice guy. A beautiful guy.

GW Did you have a sense you were making history when you recorded those classic tracks with Wolf?

SUMLIN No, and I really didn't care. But I knew that he was going to be one of the greats. And I was so devoted that I wanted to push him to the top. When you're recording for people the caliber of Howlin' Wolf, you're going to do your best. And in those days, there wasn't even a question, man: you were going to play your guts out. There had been some days in the past when my stomach ached from not having anything to eat. When I recorded, I would remember those days and remember how I never wanted to go back to them. And I would play!

GW What kind of personal relationship did you have with Wolf?

SUMLIN We were like father and son, although we had some tremendous fights. He knocked my teeth out, and I knocked his out. None of it mattered; we always got right back together.

> **"I NEVER USED A PICK AGAIN— EVERYTHING HAPPENED RIGHT THEN."**

GW You fought with Wolf? He was a huge man.

SUMLIN Oh man, he was big. He could wrap one of his fingers around my guitar neck three times. One time after a gig, we were loading up the truck, and I wasn't there because I'd run off with this cute girl who'd been sitting on my amplifier, smiling at me all night long. When I got back they were just finishing loading, and Wolf was standing on top of the stage. He started yelling at me, calling me every name you ever heard—and some you couldn't imagine—because he had to load my gear. I was embarrassed, man, because this was right in front of the whole band.

So I thought, He can't do this to me. He can't humiliate me. So I waited until he was looking the other way, and I hit him in the face as hard as I could. He didn't move. He just turned back real slow and slapped me with the back of his hand. I fell and rolled down the ramp that was pushed up to the stage to load the amps. I got up and walked back, screaming at him. When I got to the top he did the same thing again, and I rolled right back down, spitting out teeth.

GW Is that why you left to play with Muddy Waters?

SUMLIN No. Me and Wolf patched it up right away. In fact, the next morning, my wife woke me up and said that Wolf had been sitting in his car in front of my house all night long. I went out there and he apologized and gave me money to fix my mouth. I left to play with Muddy because he tripled my salary. They were rivals, and Muddy wanted to take me away from Wolf.

GW Was the rivalry between Wolf and Muddy apparent to everybody?

SUMLIN Sure. They were jealous of one another; they were enemies: "You stole my shit." "You did this." "You did that." It was endless because they were the two biggest dudes in Chicago, and they were always arguing and competing about who was number one. [*laughs*] I'll never forget the day we played the Ann Arbor Blues Festival, and Wolf and Muddy sat down and talked and made friends. They shook hands and said, "No more enemies." That thrilled me so much, I went and got a beer. This is a business we do every day and love to death, and I never understood that jealousy. It's music. Who cares who's the best?

GW What are your memories of Jimi Hendrix?

SUMLIN He was just a little ol' dude living in England. It was before his band, the Experience, hit it big. We played in Liverpool, the Beatles' home, and in walked Jimi Hendrix, a little ol' hip guy wearing earrings and a bandanna. Wolf said, "What the fuck is this guy? I ain't saying nothing to that motherfucker." He came right up to Wolf and asked if he could play his guitar. Wolf nodded and Hendrix picked it up, turned it over and played it with his teeth. [*laughs*] He played the hell out of it. Wolf looked at him, big-eyed, and said, "You hired, man, you hired!" He said, "No thank you, Mr. Wolf. But I admire you and the blues. You guys are 100 percent. Beautiful, man."

I never played with him after that, but I saw him do his thing in New York, after he hit, and I fell in love. The guy was great! Just a little ol' skinny youngster. He was in his twenties, but he looked 16 or 17, and he was good, man. I mean, really good.

GW Hendrix called you a big influence. Your playing on several tracks from the Fifties represents some of the earliest instances of guitarist using distortion. How did you do that?

SUMLIN I was just using my Gibson and my Wabash amp, which I used for a long time. It was one of the first amps to have 15-inch speakers. I also got an Echoplex right when they came out, and combined with those 15-inch speakers, that made "distortion."

GW What sort of Gibson did you play?

SUMLIN A Les Paul—I believe it was a '56. I often played them. I also had a Kay guitar. For four years, Wolf didn't have a piano or even a bass—just two guitars and drums, so Jody Williams [*Wolf's second guitarist*] and I coordinated our parts closely and decided that we would both play Kays. I didn't like that Les Paul all that much, but I sure do wish that I had it now. [*laughs*] **BL**

STEPHEN COHEN / RETNA LTD.

LONG LIVE THE KING

THE MAN WHO ONCE CLAIMED TO HAVE INVENTED BLUES POWER MAY HAVE BEEN TELLING THE TRUTH. IN AN INTERVIEW SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEATH, ALBERT KING EXPLAINS HOW HIS UNORTHODOX PLAYING STYLE AND KILLER TONE ELECTRIFIED THE BLUES.

By ALAN PAUL

PG 58

BLUES LEGEND HAS IT THAT Mike Bloomfield, lead guitarist of the Paul Butterfield Blues Band and for a time *the* Sixties guitar hero, once engaged Jimi Hendrix in a cutting contest before thousands of screaming fans. Hendrix drew first and unleashed a soaring, cosmic blues attack. As Bloomfield stood transfixed in awe, struggling to plot a response to Hendrix's brilliant fury, one thought ran like a mantra through his mind: "I wish I were Albert King...I wish I were Albert King..."

Some two decades after that episode—more than 20 years after Hendrix's death and 10 years after Bloomfield's passing—Albert King was still showing blues guitarists how it's done when *Guitar World* caught up with him on a blustery Cleveland night in the winter of 1991. Brutal winds and two feet of swirling snow made the city inhospitable to man and blues alike, but inside a suburban club, a force of nature even more powerful than a blizzard held sway: Albert King—all six feet and five inches of him—stood onstage, puffing a pipe, his upside-down Flying V looking like a toy guitar in his massive hands. As clouds of smoke billowed from his snarling mouth, the left-handed King ripped off scorching, jagged blues lines.

On that wintry Ohio night it was easy to understand Bloomfield's desperate invocation of the massive bluesman in his hour of need. And it was equally clear that King had lost little of the of the devastating blues power that has made his playing the standard of excellence for guitarists from Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton to Stevie Ray Vaughan and Gary Moore.

Several nights after the Cleveland show, King, resplendent in an open-collared tuxedo, stepped from a limousine in midtown Manhattan. His pipe was still gripped tightly between his teeth, but the onstage snarl was gone. King was all smiles as he headed into a posh nightclub to receive a Pioneer Award from the Rhythm and Blues Foundation.

"I never really considered myself R&B," King said. "I'm a bluesman. But there's nothing like being honored by your peers. There's also nothing like this." His gold teeth sparkled in a broad smile as he held up a check for $15,000, his bounty for a lifetime of groundbreaking work.

Reprinted from GUITAR WORLD, *JULY 1991*

HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

King in the Seventies

While King was inarguably a bluesman, his earliest recordings for Bobbin Records featured hard-swinging big-band arrangements. Later, he would record his most influential work—including "Born Under a Bad Sign" and "Crosscut Saw"—for Stax, backed by Booker T and the MGs, the R&B label's famed house band.

But whatever the musical setting, King's lead playing was always characterized by stinging, river-deep tone and a totally identifiable style, developed as a result of his unorthodox technique. Left-handed, King played with his guitar held upside down, treble strings up, which, among other things, caused him to bend his strings down. "I learned that style myself," King said. "And no one can duplicate it, though many have tried."

At Estuary Park in Oakland, California, September 3, 1990

GUITAR WORLD You've recorded a very wide variety of material, much of which has departed from the standard blues formats. How did you arrive at the appropriate approach for any given song?

ALBERT KING I did that in the studio. We would come up with different styles to go behind songs—then I'd do whatever fit. I might try three or four rhythms behind a song, find the one that feels just right and record it. I can hear real good, and I never saw the point of limiting what I listened to. Lots of times I heard new things that surprised me. The guys at Stax [*guitarist Steve Cropper, bassist Donald "Duck" Dunn, drummer Al Jackson and organist Booker T. Jones, plus the Memphis Horns*] were good for playing with different grooves and helping me find the right one. I liked playing with them because they were good idea people—they'd twist things around into different grooves.

GW Your guitar style changed noticeably from your early recordings with the Bobbin label to your work with Stax. You didn't use as much vibrato originally, for instance.

KING No, I didn't. I never made a decision to change my style. Some of it I forgot and some of it just automatically changed. Nothing can stay the same forever. I do all of the vibrato with my hand—I don't use no gadgets or anything. I used to only use Acoustic amps, but I went to a Roland 120 because it's easier to handle and it puts out for me.

GW There has always been so much swing to your music. Have you listened to a lot of jazz?

KING Yes. I've always been a lover of jazz, especially big band jazz. On the Bobbin stuff, I used a lot of orchestration and big-band arrangements to mix the jazz with the blues. I went for the swinging jazz arrangements and the pure blues guitar.

GW Your lead guitar has always been very lyrical. Do you think of the guitar as a second voice?

KING Yes, I do. I play the "singing guitar"—that's what I've always called it. I also sing along with my notes. It's how I think about where I'm going.

GW You don't play a lot of chords.

KING No, I play single-note. I can play chords but I don't like 'em. I don't have time for them. I'm paying enough people around me to play chords. [*laughs*]

GW You're also noted for your tendency to bend two strings at one time.

KING Yeah. Lots of times I don't intend to do that,

CLAYTON CALL / RETNA LTD.

but I'm reaching for a bend and bring another one along. My fingers get mixed up, because I don't practice. When I get through with a concert, I don't even want to see my guitar for a while.

GW Have you always felt that way?

KING No, no. Just lately, in the last four or five years, since I've been really feeling like I want to retire.

GW You are one of the only guitarists I've ever heard who will start a song with a bent note. On "Angel of Mercy," for instance.

KING Again, I didn't plan that out; it's just what I felt and the way I recorded it. The bent note is my thing, man, and I'll put one anywhere it feels right. There are no rules.

GW I've heard stories of people who tried to copy your sound but didn't know that you were playing upside down.

KING [*laughs*] Yeah, I've heard that, too. And people who try to restring their guitars to get my sound, and everything else you can imagine. Jimi Hendrix used to take pictures of my fingers to try and see what I was doing. He never quite figured it out, but Jimi was a hell of guitar player, the fastest dude around—at the time. There's some kids who are coming around now...*whew!* Forget about it! They burn up the fretboard.

GW Obviously, Hendrix was a great guitarist. But what do you think of him as a blues player?

KING Well, to me, he was overplaying to play the blues. He'd hit two or three good licks here and there and then speed them up and hit them over and over until he'd drown out all the good ones. The kids loved it, and I liked his playing, too—that was his style. But don't call him a great bluesman. I think he was going more in that direction, but we'll never know. He didn't take care of himself.

GW Your tone is so tough. How do you make it so heavy?

KING For one thing, I usually keep my treble all the way up, unless I want to play real soft. Then I zip it down.

GW You really do utilize dynamics effectively. Do you think that's something a lot of younger players miss the point of?

KING Definitely. Because they like to play loud and high all the time. And when you get ready to play chords, you got nothing to go to. I like to mix volumes, treble and bass. There's a high, there's a midrange and there's a bottom. If you don't ever mix that stuff up, you're not a complete player.

GW What is the single most common mistake young players make with the blues?

KING Overplaying. They play too loud, scream too high and run too fast. See, when you overplay, you get too loud and people are gonna mistake what you're doing for a hole in the air. [*laughs*]

GW You appeared on Gary Moore's *Still Got the Blues* album. What did you think of Moore's guitar work?

KING Gary's a good player. To me, Gary and Stevie Ray Vaughan were two of our best young players. I was sure hurt when we lost Stevie. I really wanted to see him and Gary hook up together. I wanted to see that concert. I don't care where it was—I would have caught a plane. No doubt about it, both those guys had what it takes to really do it.

GW Did you give Gary any pointers?

KING Yeah. I learned a few things from him, he learned a few things from me. I told him to slow it down, double up on his licks—play every other one—so that you could feel what he's doing. If you play too fast or too loud, you cancel yourself out. But Gary plays a whole lot of notes and still sounds good. Every now and then you're bound to put them in place if you play enough. [*laughs*]

GW A lot of blues players hit the right note and play the right changes. Yet, something's missing. What is that something?

KING I'm going to ask you. You're the listener. What do you hear or not hear?

GW It's hard to describe. It's more of a feeling.

KING That's it. That's it, man. Stop right there. Don't overthink this. I just told you, once you lose the feeling, you ain't got nothin' but a show going. It's not deep.

GW So can you learn how to play the blues from a book or reading music?

KING No way, man. First, you got to get in your mind what you want to play. If you hear a good lick—even if you're just rehearsing to yourself—and you feel it, then hit another one and another one and another one. The next thing you know you got 15 or 20 different licks you can hit, and they all feel good. But if you rush right through, hitting them all, you're not even going to know what you did. You've got to take your time and learn your bag one lick at a time, and take your time in your delivery.

GW Your first appearance at the Fillmore [*1968*] opened up a whole new audience for you. Were you surprised that those people were waiting to hear your music?

KING Yes, I was very surprised—and very glad. They made me welcome, treated me nice. Bill Graham opened up a young, white crowd for me by putting me in there.

GW Robert Cray has remarked that he had one of the biggest thrills of his life when you recorded his song, "Phone Booth." [*"I'm in a Phone Booth, Baby," 1984*]

KING Yeah, I did one of his songs because the groove fit and that's what I look for. Robert is a good player and a very nice person, but I haven't seen him in a while and I hope that success hasn't gotten to his head. I've seen that happen to many, many people, and it's one of the saddest things you'll ever see. It matters who you are and what you're made of. Anytime you think you're greater than the people that buy your records, that's when you lose it.

GW You have such a commanding stage presence. Is there anyone who would intimidate you if they walked onstage?

KING No. If it's my show, it's my stage, and I won't let anyone mess with me. Believe me.

GW When did you start using the Flying V?

KING Oh, man. Way back around 1958. Just about every one I've ever had has been custom made.

GW Why did you name your guitar "Lucy"?

KING Lucille Ball. I loved her.

GW It didn't have anything to do with B.B.'s Lucille?

KING You'd have to ask B.B. Mine was named Lucy first.

GW Have you and B.B. always gotten along, or has there been any tension between you—for instance over the fact that B.B. is always called "The King of the Blues"?

KING Oh God, no. Me and B.B. and Bobby [*Bland*] always got along great. We go all over the country and sell out every theater we go to. No misunderstandings, no arguments. I'll open the show for anybody as long as I get paid off. I'll be asleep in my hotel while B.B.'s still playing, and that's fine with me. B.B.'s a night owl. He closes the show because he stays up most of the night talking, anyhow. [*laughs*]

GW Has the fact that you once played drums affected your guitar style much?

KING Not really, except that I can tell immediately if a tempo is off. Being left-handed affected my style more than anything. I started playing drums just because I got a gig with Jimmy Reed and needed the money.

GW Why haven't you ever used a pick?

KING I couldn't hold one—my fingers were too big. I kept trying and the thing would fly across the house. I just always had a real hard time gripping it, so I learned to play without one.

GW What type of music did your first band, the In the Groove Boys, play?

KING We only knew three songs, and we'd play them fast, medium and slow. That made nine songs. Somehow that got over all night long.

GW Did you play strictly by yourself when you started?

KING I rehearsed to myself for five years before I played with another soul. That may account for some of my style. I knew that playing the blues was a life I chose to lead. And when I started there were three things I decided to do: play the blues, play 'em right and make all the gigs. And I have. I've never drank liquor in my life or used dope, and I don't allow it around me. That has a lot to do with why I'm still doing what I'm doing, still feeling good and still in good health. It makes me sick to see the things that people do to themselves when they get all messed up.

GW Every 10 or 15 years there seems to be a blues renaissance and people say there's one happening now. Is it real?

KING The blues "come back" whenever people realize that they can make money booking it. You didn't hear about young bluesman for a while until Stevie Ray and Robert hit, but they were always around. It's just a matter of exposure. **BL**

"I CAN PLAY CHORDS BUT I DON'T LIKE 'EM. I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THEM."

GET MORE TRANSCRIPTIONS
VIDEOS
PREMIUM TABS
USER TABS
GUITAR WORLD TABS
& MORE!
TABS.GUITARWORLD.COM

"LITTLE WING" STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN

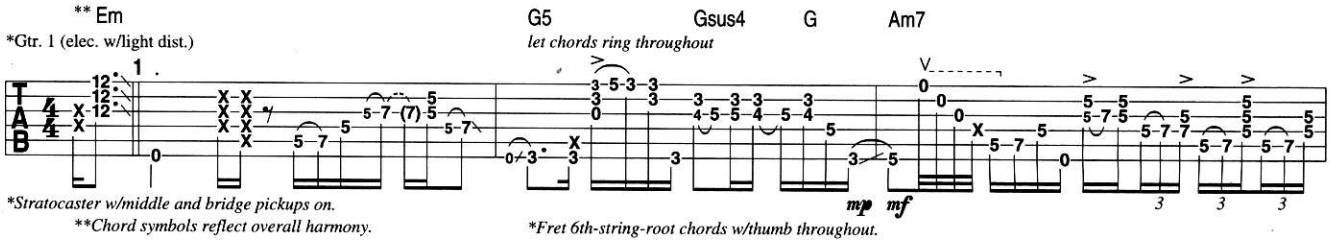
As heard on **GREATEST HITS** (EPIC)

Words and Music by **Jimi Hendrix** ✶ *Transcribed by* **Dave Whitehill** ✶ *Bass transcription by* **Matt Scharfglass**

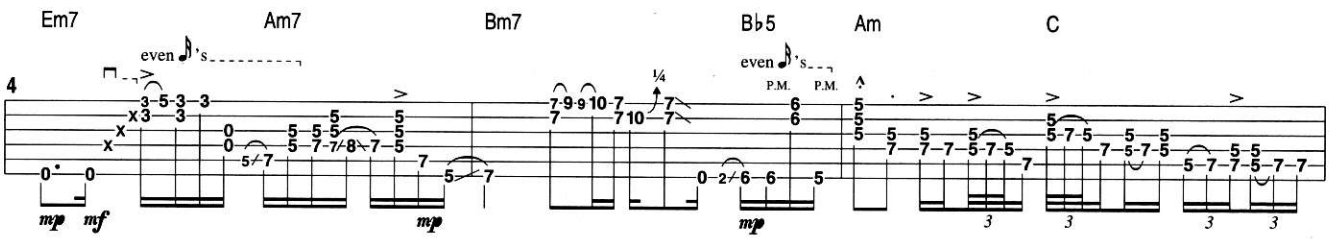
Gtr. is tuned down one half step (low to high, E♭ A♭ D♭ G♭ B♭ E♭).
Bass tuning, low to high: E♭ A♭ D♭ G♭.
All music sounds in the key of E♭ minor, one half step lower than written.

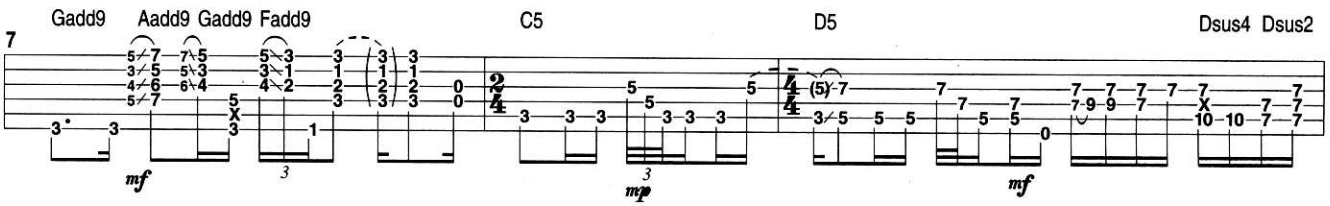
A Intro (0:00)

Slowly ♩ = 60 (♪♪♪ = ♪♪♪)

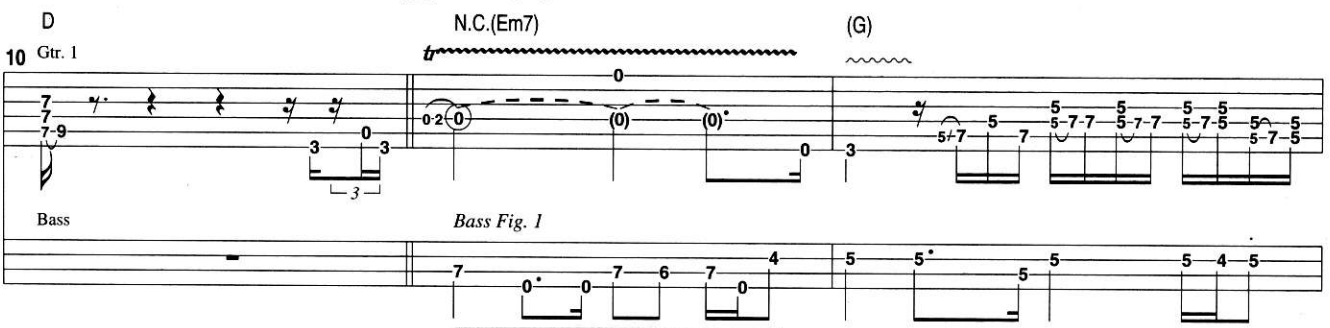


*Stratocaster w/middle and bridge pickups on.
**Chord symbols reflect overall harmony.
*Fret 6th-string-root chords w/thumb throughout.





B Theme (0:38)



For more bass tips, check out
PLAY BASS DVD at www.guitarworld.com/store.

COPYRIGHT © 1968, 1977 BY EXPERIENCE HENDRIX, L.L.C. COPYRIGHT RENEWED 1996.
ALL RIGHTS CONTROLLED AND ADMINISTERED BY EXPERIENCE HENDRIX, L.L.C. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF HAL LEONARD CORPORATION.

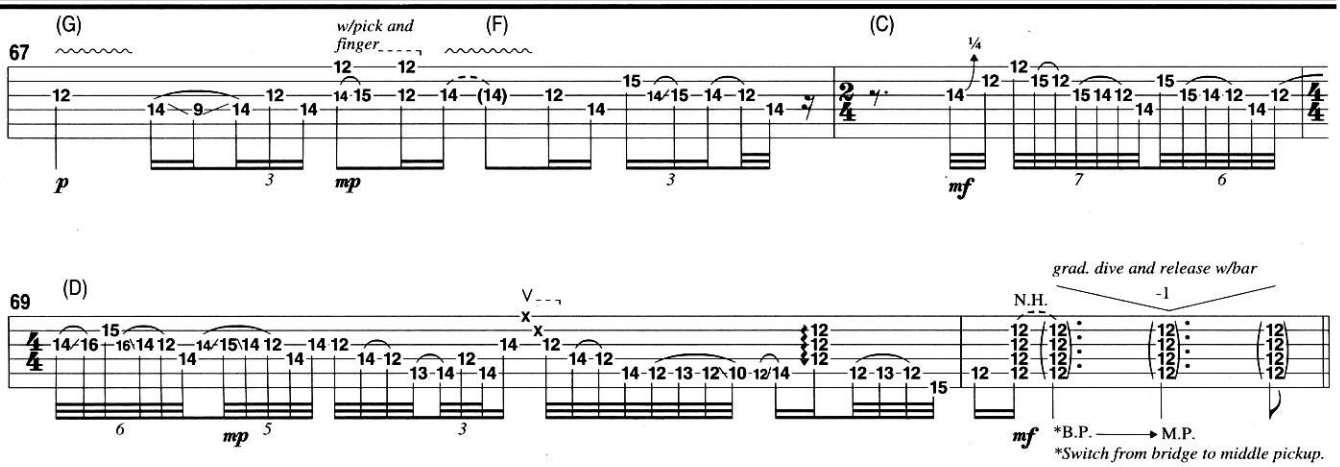
*Top note is sounded sympathetically by adjacent string vibrato.

"LITTLE WING"

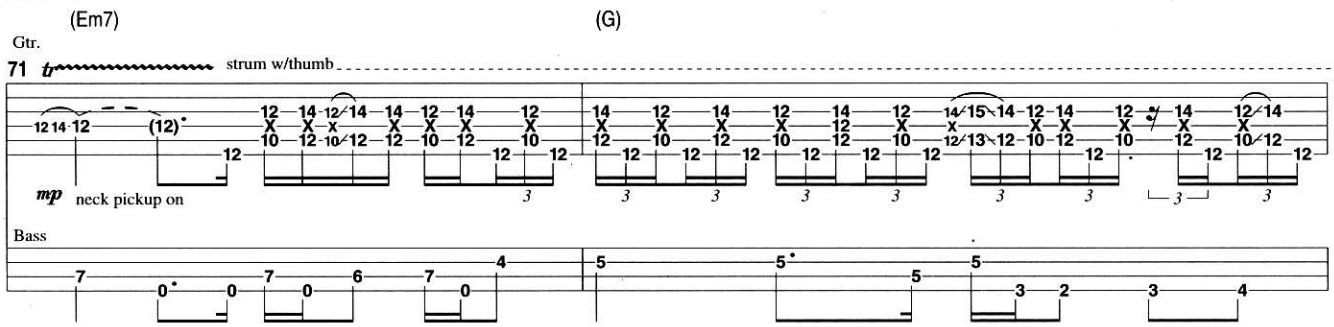
(Am7)
(C)
(G)
(F)
26
let octaves ring
(C)
(D)
28
w/pick and finger
D (1:59)
(Em7)
(G)
31
lay back
(Am7)
(Em7)
33
(Bm7)
(B♭5)
(Am7)
(C)
35
string noise
w/pick and finger
let ring
let ring

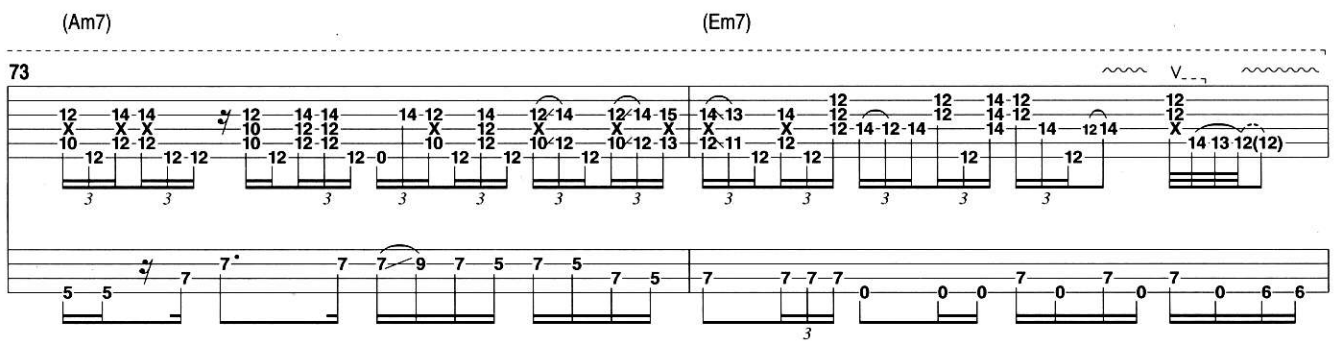
G
F
grad. bend
C
D
37
mf
f
(w/dist.)
w/bar
-½
N.H.
E (2:40)
N.C.(Em7)
(G)
grad. slide
40
*B.P.
M.P.
ff
*Switch pickup selector to bridge and then middle position.
Bass Fig. 2
let ring
(Am7)
(Em7)
Em
43
(Bm7)
(B♭5)
(Am7)
(C)
½
P.H.
grad. bend
45
let octaves ring
G
F
C
Csus2
47

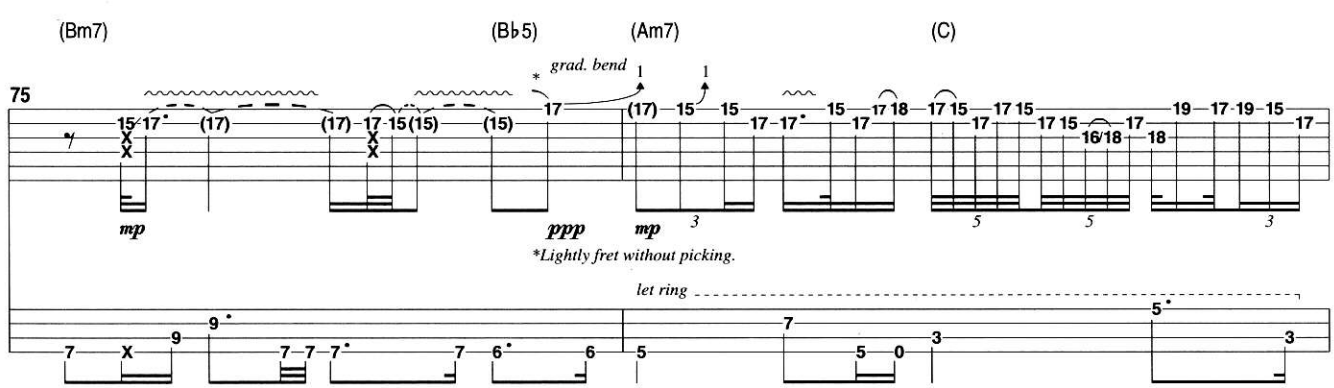
D
49
grad. dive
and release w/bar
-1
N.H.
f
end Bass Fig. 2
F (3:14)
N.C.(Em7)
G
Gtr.
51
Bass repeats Bass Fig. 2 simile (see bar 41)
ff
(Am7)
(Em7)
53
let ring
(Bm7)
(B♭5)
(Am7)
(C)
55
G
F
C
D
D6
D
Dsus4
Dsus2
57
G (3:57)
D
N.H.
grad. dive
-1
N.C.(Em7)
(G)
60
p
mf
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 simile
(see bar 11)
mp
(Am7)
(Em7)
63
p
pp
(Bm7)
(B♭5)
(Am7)
(C)
65


(G)
w/pick and finger
(F)
(C)
67
p
mp
mf
(D)
69
mp
mf
grad. dive and release w/bar
N.H.
*B.P. → M.P.
*Switch from bridge to middle pickup.

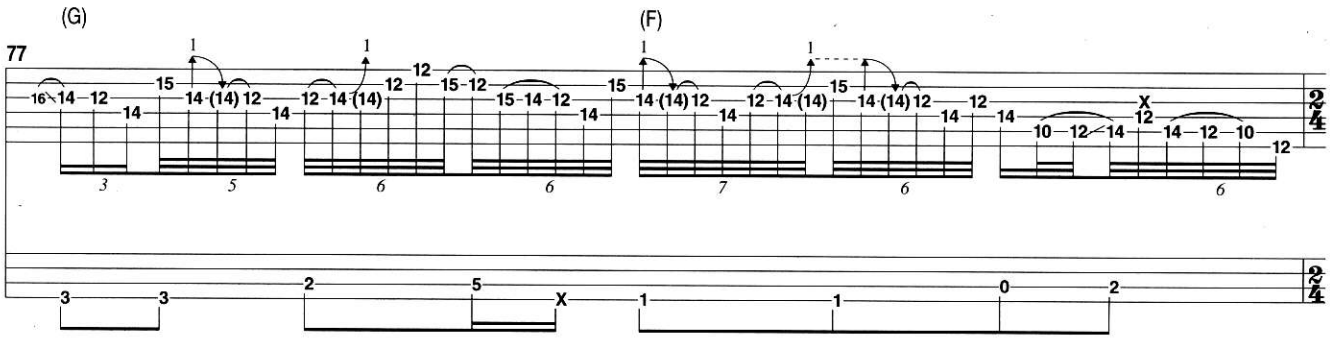
H (4:38)

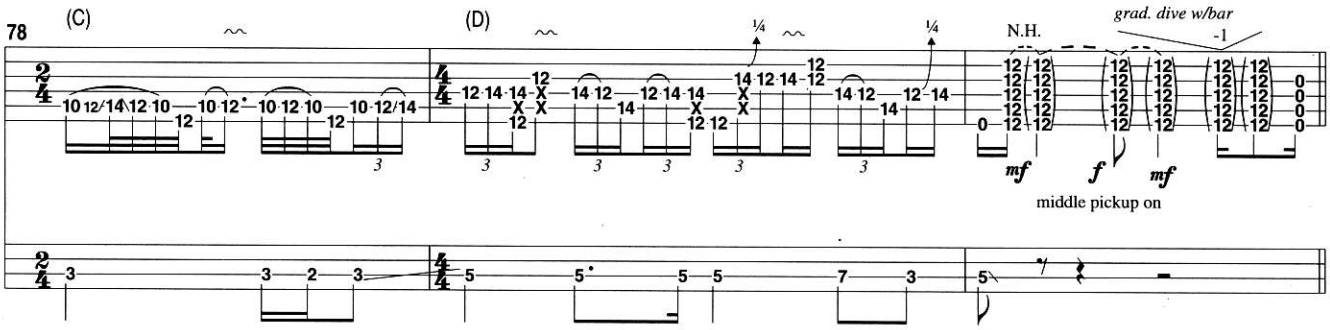

(Em7)
(G)
Gtr.
71
strum w/thumb
mp
neck pickup on
Bass


(Am7)
(Em7)
73

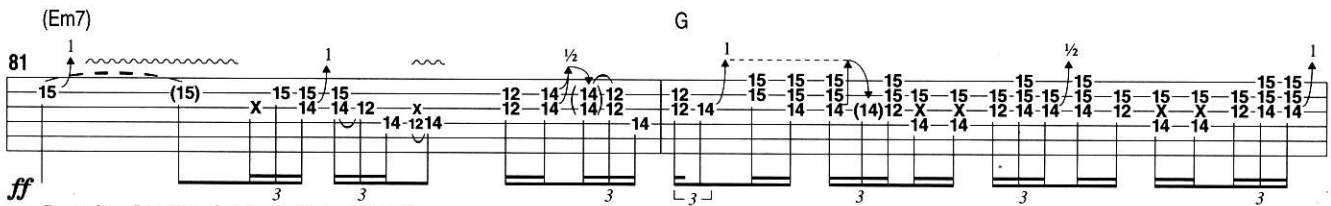

(Bm7)
(B♭5)
(Am7)
(C)
75
grad. bend
mp
ppp
mp
*Lightly fret without picking.
let ring

"LITTLE WING"

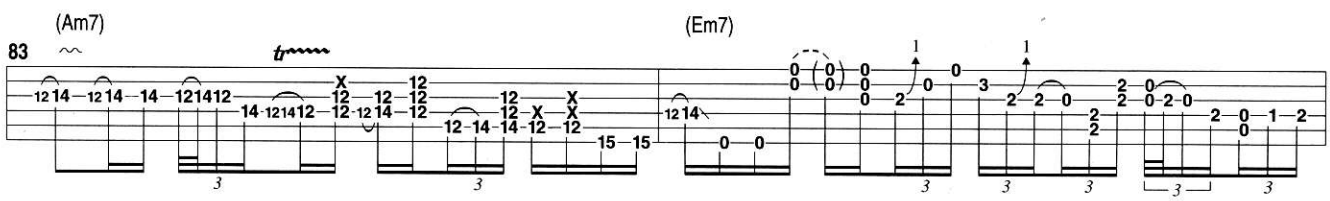


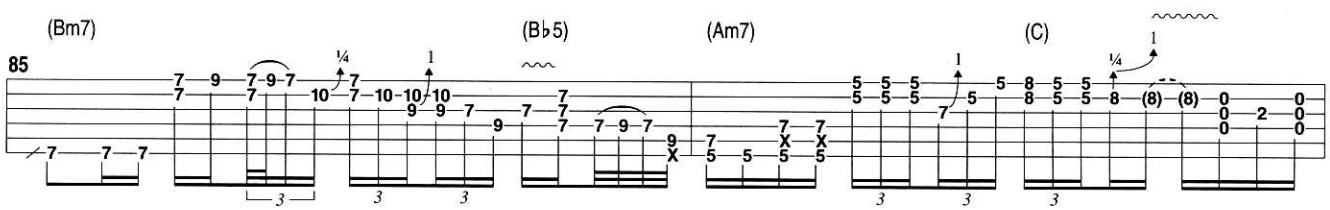


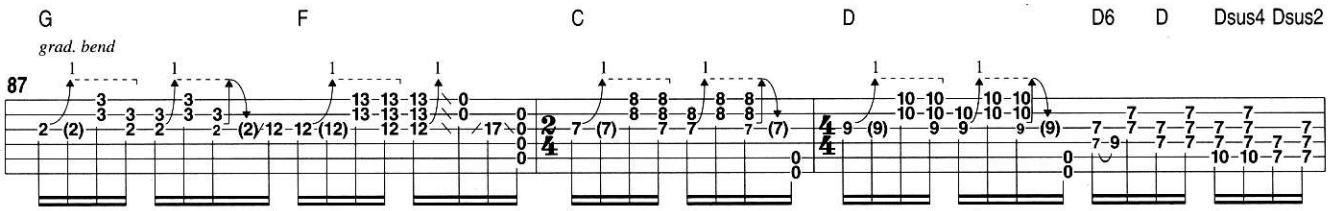
I (5:17)

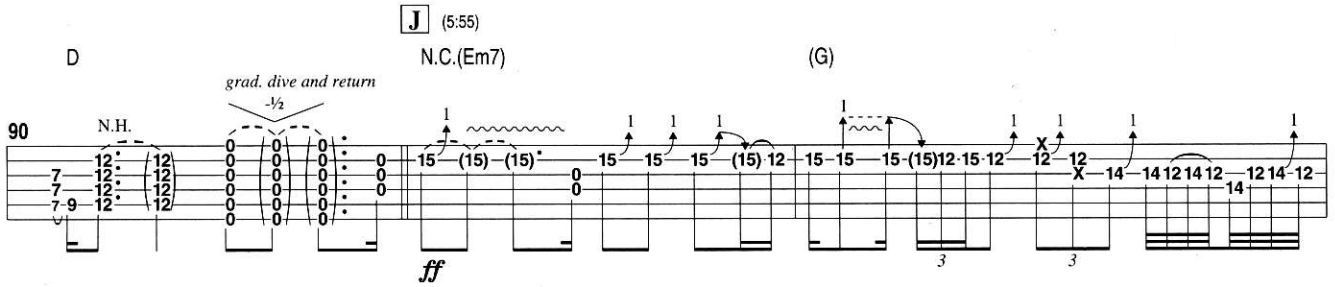


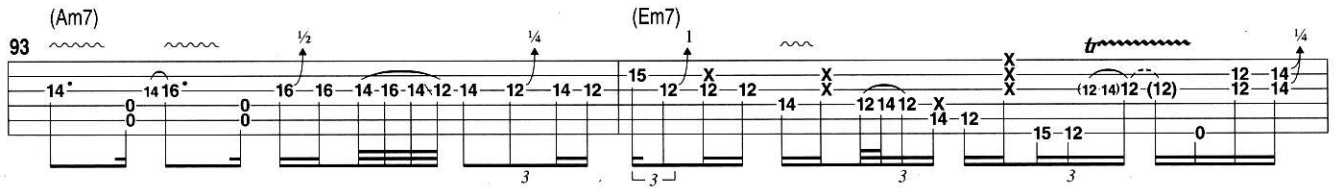
Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 twice simile (see bar 41)

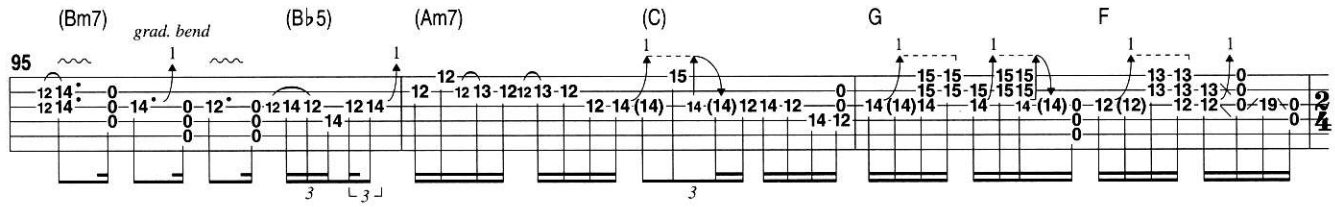


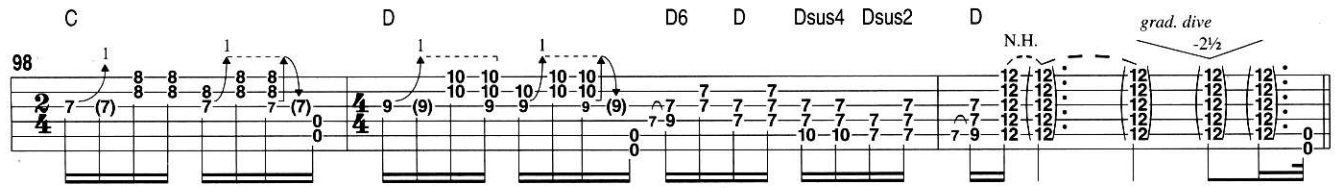


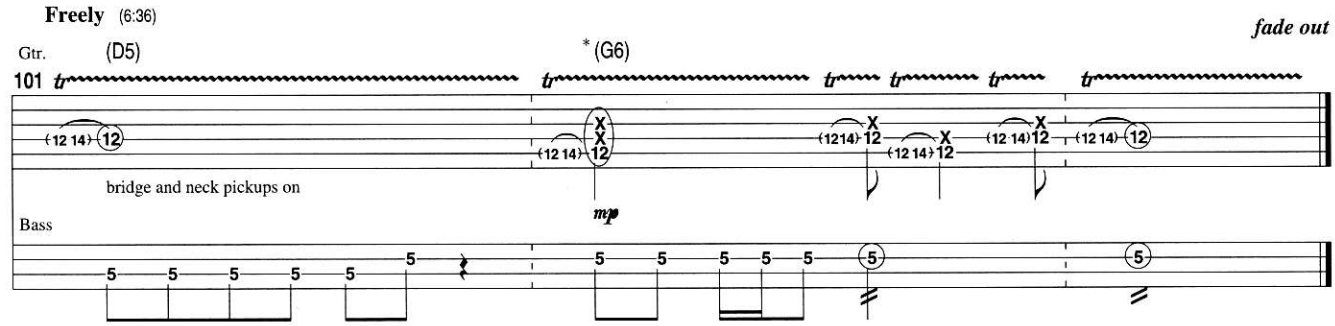

G
F
C
D
D6
D
Dsus4 Dsus2
grad. bend
87


J (5:55)
D
N.C.(Em7)
(G)
grad. dive and return
-½
90
N.H.
ff


(Am7)
(Em7)
93


(Bm7)
grad. bend
(B♭5)
(Am7)
(C)
G
F
95


C
D
D6
D
Dsus4
Dsus2
D
N.H.
grad. dive
-2½
98


Freely (6:36)
fade out
Gtr.
(D5)
*(G6)
101
bridge and neck pickups on
Bass
mp

GET MORE TRANSCRIPTIONS
VIDEOS
PREMIUM TABS
USER TABS
GUITAR WORLD TABS
& MORE!
TABS.GUITARWORLD.COM

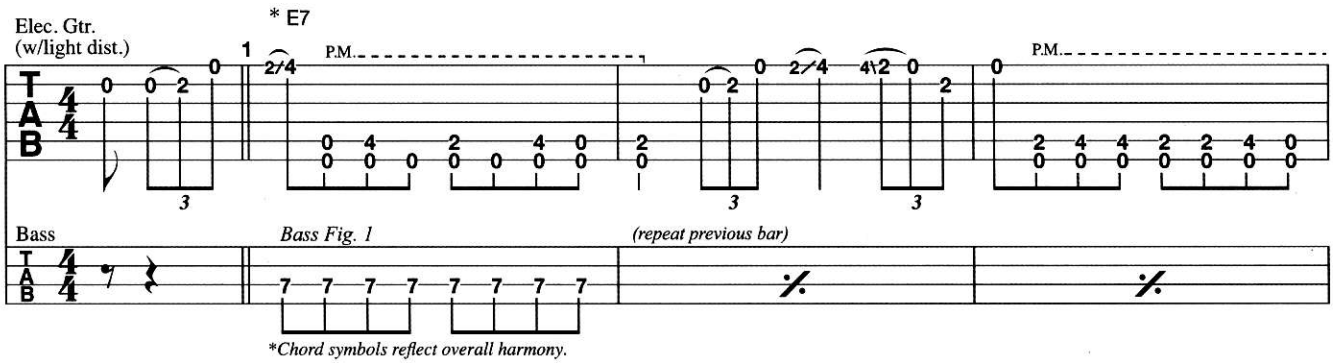
"HIDE AWAY" FREDDIE KING

As heard on **17 GREATEST HITS** (GUSTO)

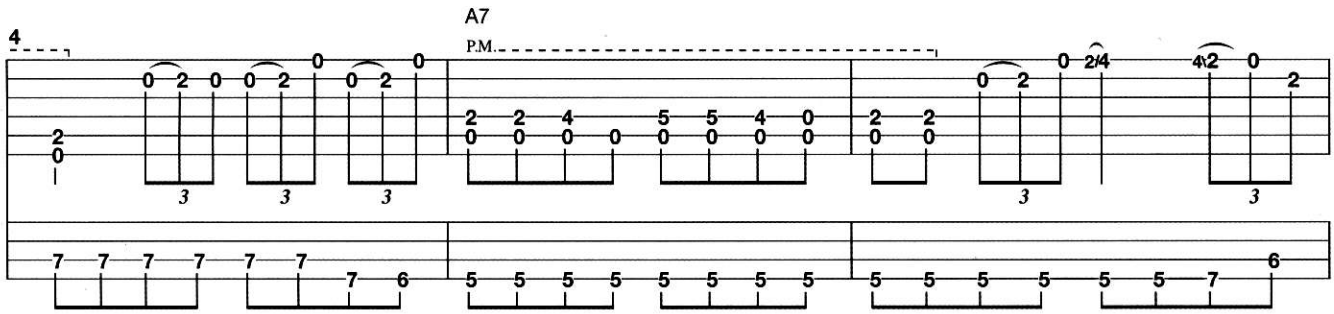
Music by **Freddie King and Sonny Thompson** ✶ *Transcribed by* **Troy Nelson** ✶ *Bass transcription by* **Matt Scharfglass**

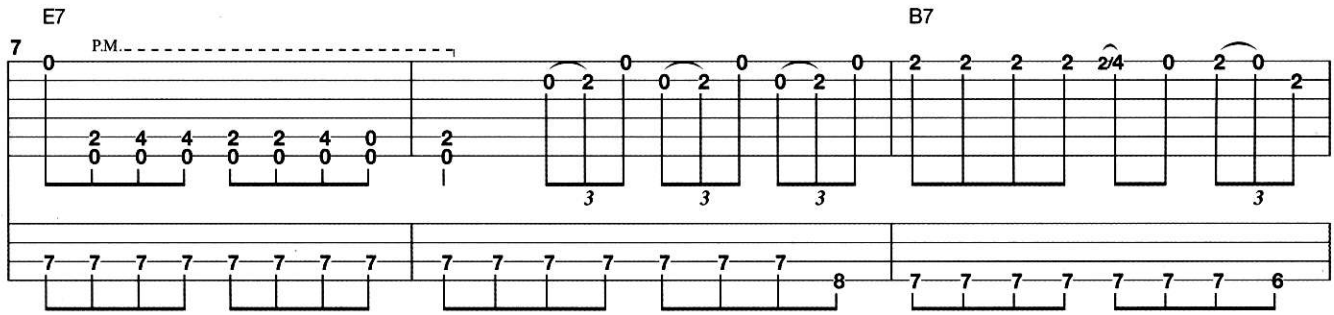
A **Main Theme** (0:00)

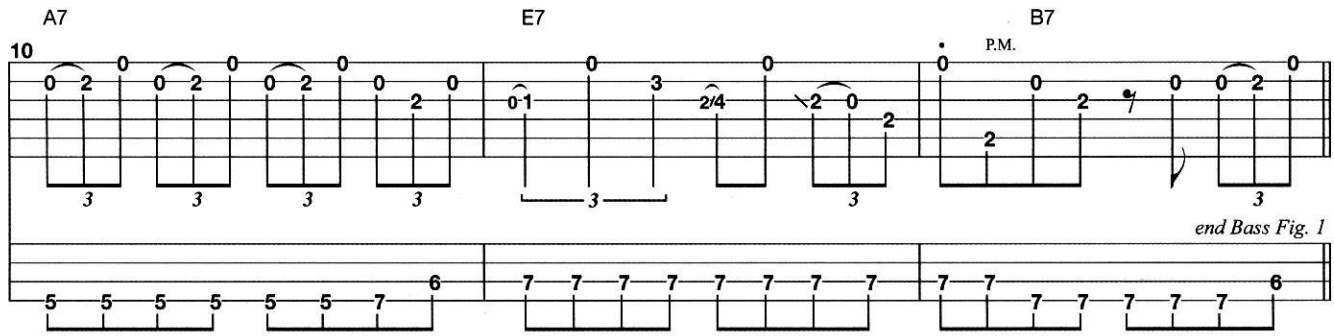
Moderately ♩ = 134 (♫ = ♩³♪)



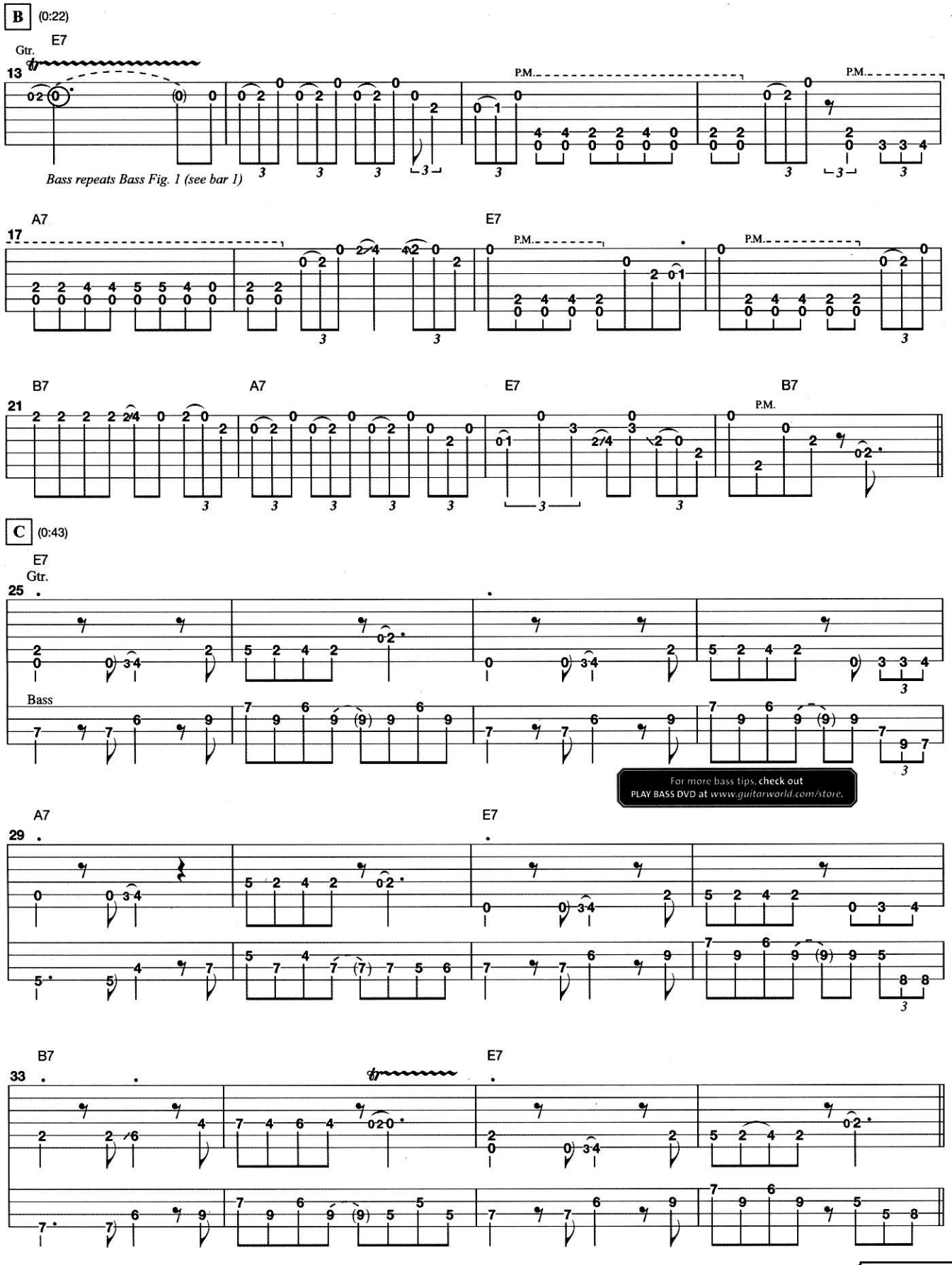
*Chord symbols reflect overall harmony.







COPYRIGHT © 1961 BY FORT KNOX MUSIC INC. AND TRIO MUSIC COMPANY.
COPYRIGHT RENEWED. INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT SECURED. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
USED BY PERMISSION. REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF HAL LEONARD CORPORATION.

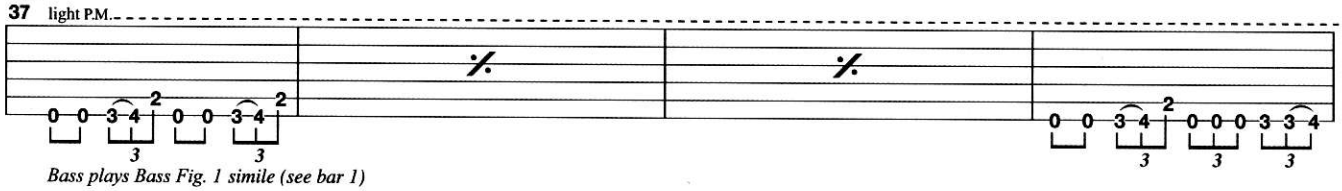

B (0:22)
E7
Gtr.
13
P.M.
P.M.
Bass repeats Bass Fig. 1 (see bar 1)
A7
E7
17
P.M.
P.M.
B7
A7
E7
B7
21
P.M.
C (0:43)
E7
Gtr.
25
Bass
For more bass tips, check out
PLAY BASS DVD at www.guitarworld.com/store.
A7
E7
29
B7
E7
33

"HIDE AWAY"

D (1:05)

Gtr. E7

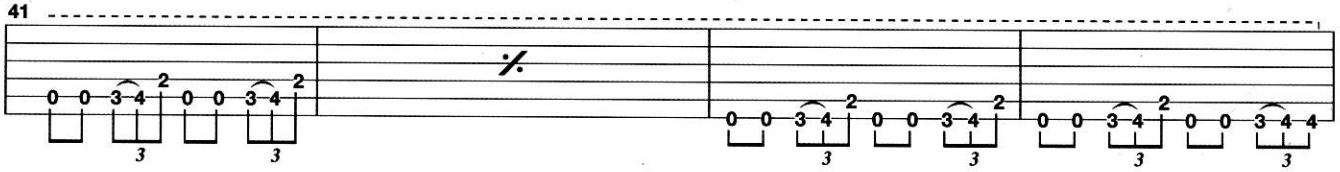
37 light P.M.



Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 simile (see bar 1)

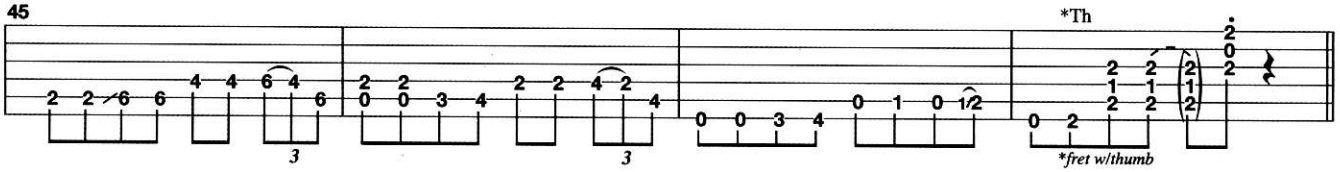
A7 E7

41



B7 A7 E7 B7

45 *Th



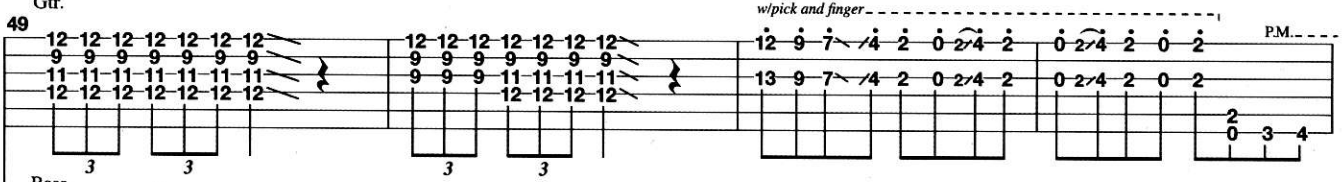
**fret w/thumb*

E (1:26)

E9

Gtr. ♫ = ♫ w/pick and finger

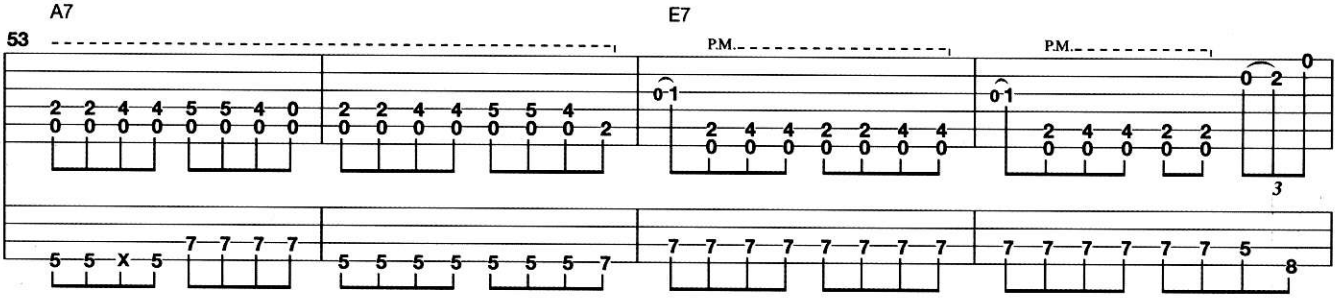
49 P.M.



Bass

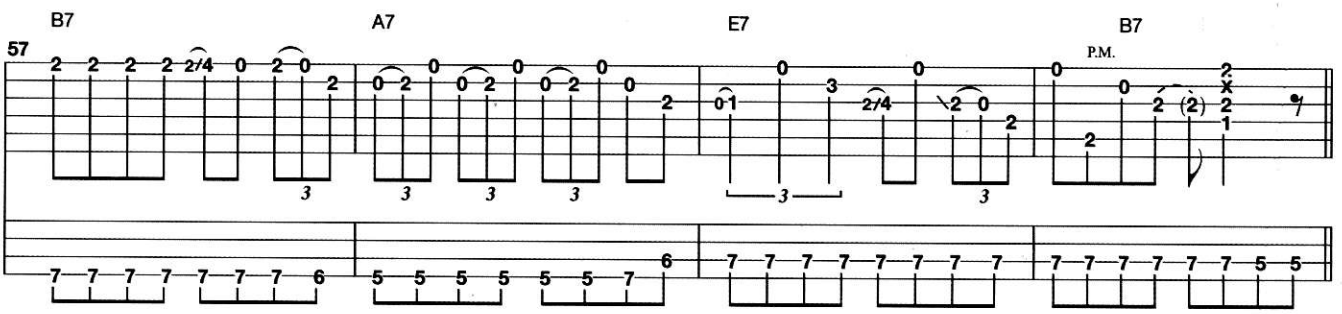
A7 E7

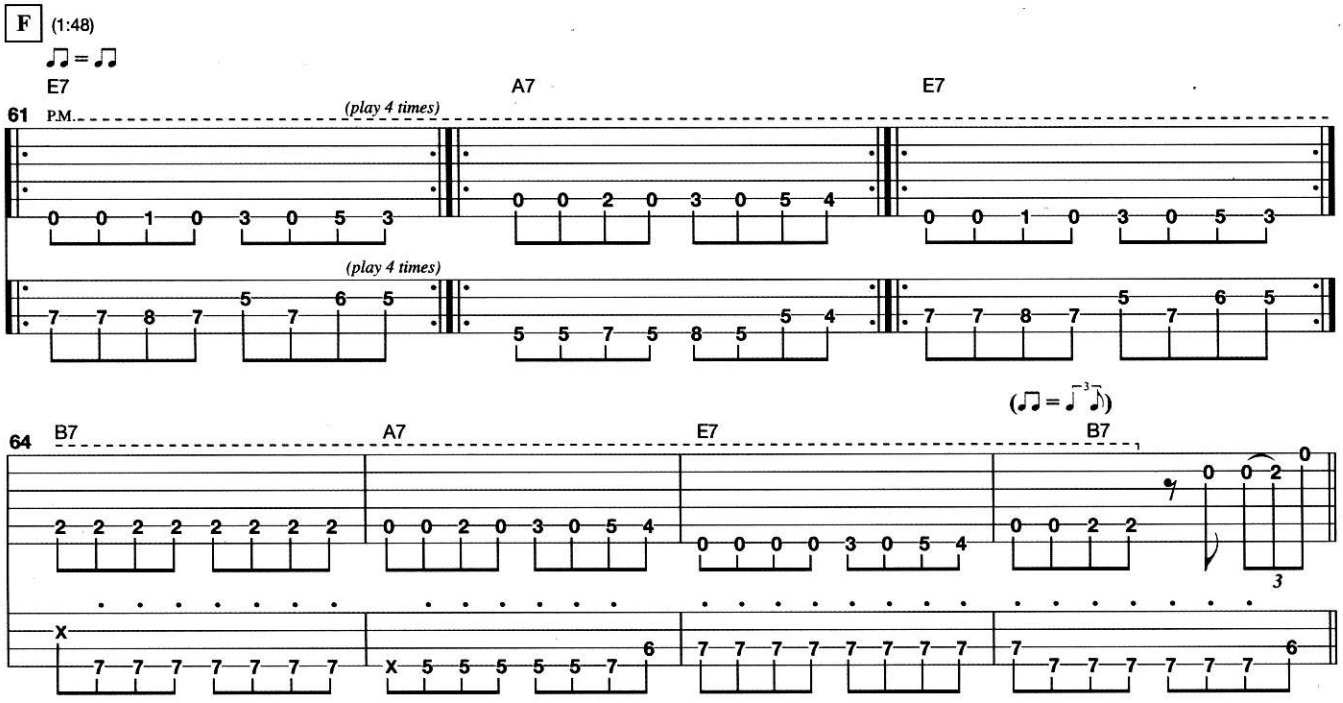
53 P.M. P.M.

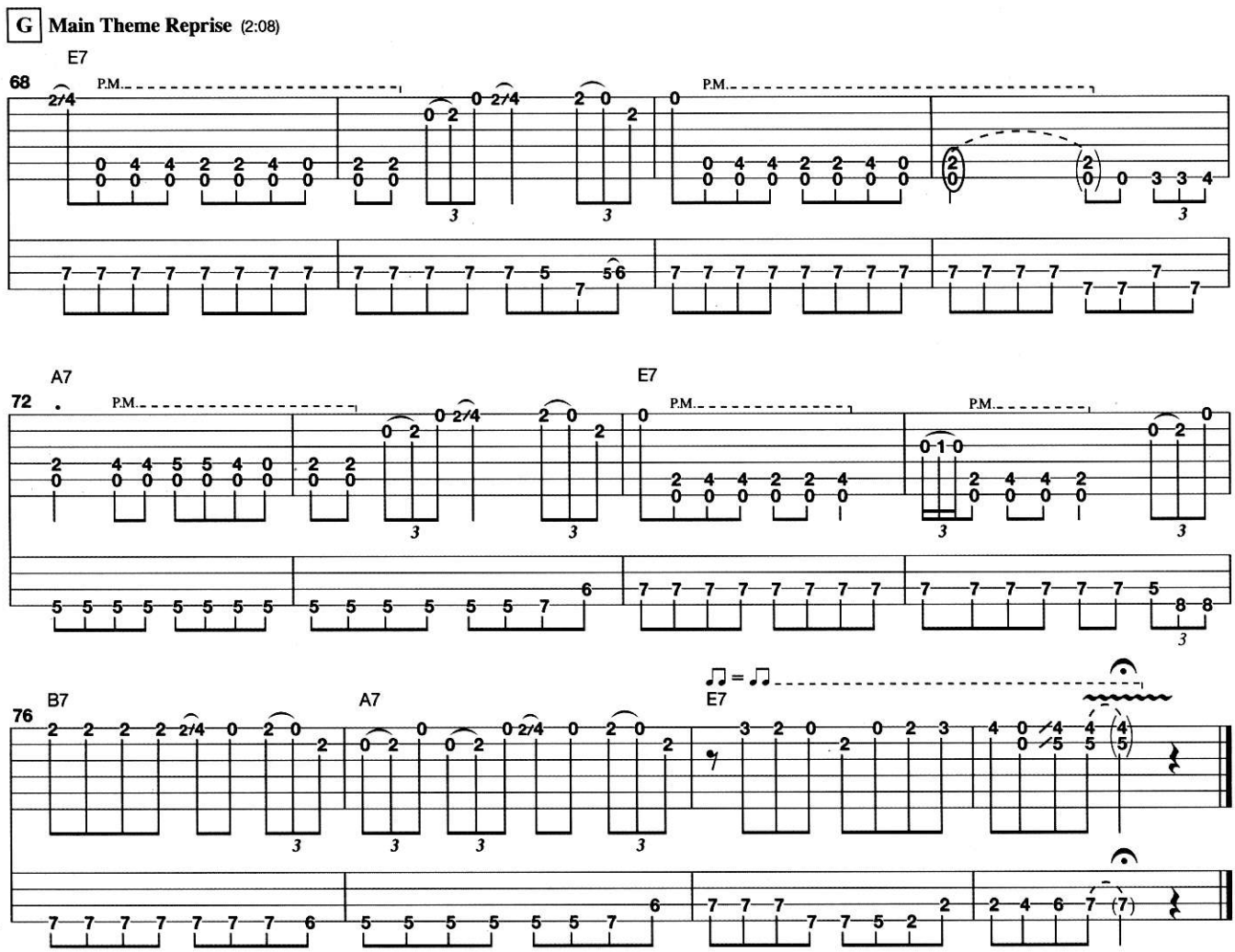


B7 A7 E7 B7

57 P.M.




F (1:48)
♫ = ♫
E7
A7
E7
61
P.M.
(play 4 times)
(play 4 times)
(♫ = ♫³♪)
64
B7
A7
E7
B7

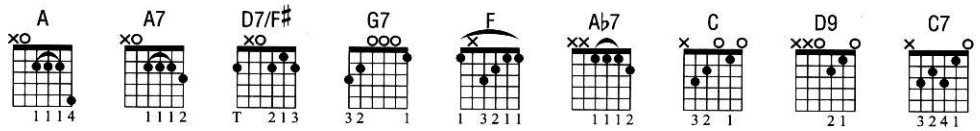

G Main Theme Reprise (2:08)
E7
68
P.M.
P.M.
A7
E7
72
P.M.
P.M.
P.M.
♫ = ♫
B7
A7
E7
76

GET MORE TRANSCRIPTIONS VIDEOS PREMIUM TABS USER TABS GUITAR WORLD TABS & MORE! TABS.GUITARWORLD.COM

"WABASH RAG" BLIND BLAKE

As heard on **THE BEST OF BLIND BLAKE** (YAZOO)
Transcribed by **Jeff Perrin**

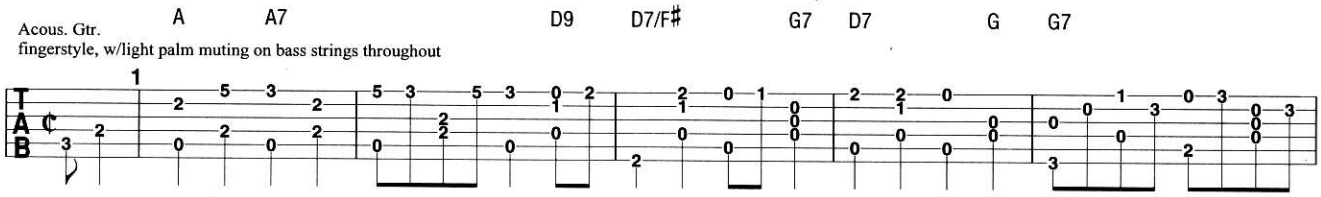
Tune down one half step (low to high, E♭ A♭ D♭ G♭ B♭ E♭).
Music sounds one half step lower than written, in the key of B.



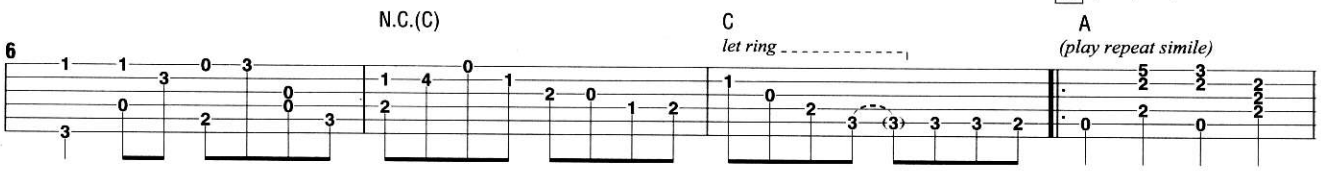
A **Intro** (0:00)

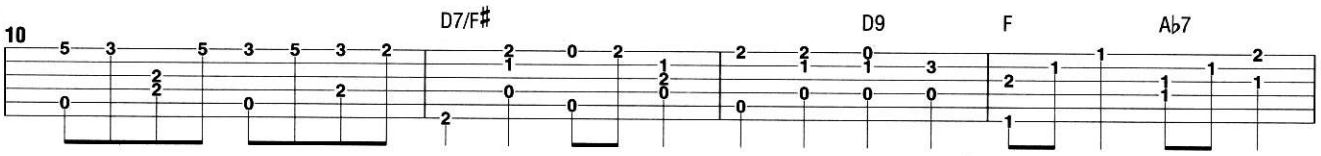
Fast ♩ = 180 (♫ = ♩³♪)

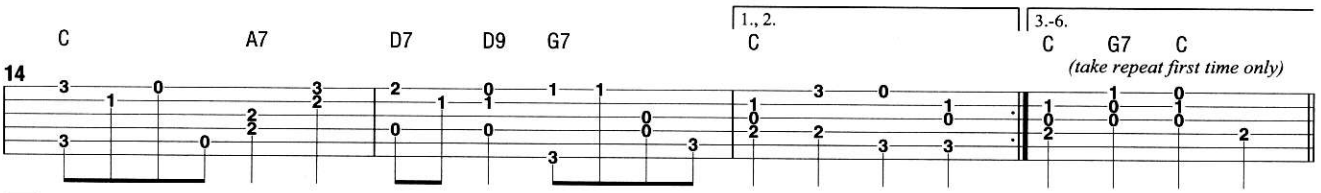
Acous. Gtr.
fingerstyle, w/light palm muting on bass strings throughout



B (0:12, 1:34)



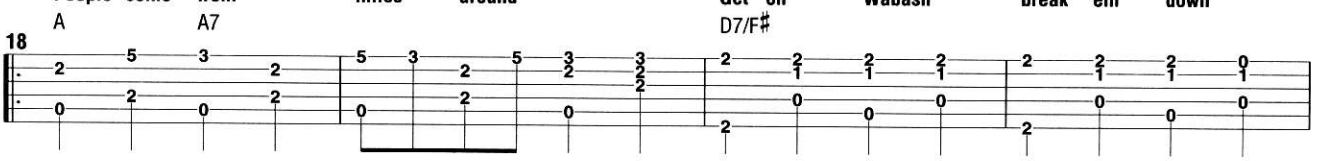




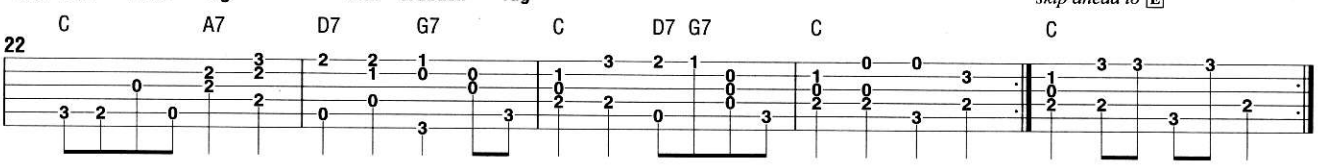
C **Verses** (0:33, 0:43, 0:54, 1:43, 1:53, 2:22)

1. Down south on Wabash Street
2. They are doin' it night and day it
3. Every little kid that you meet
4. Grab me mama hold me tight
5. Throw your hands way up high
6. People come from miles around

Everybody you chance to meet
will drive your blues away
in the alley in the street
Let's mess around the rest of the night
Grab me mama make me cry
Get on Wabash break 'em down



1.-6. Doin' that rag that Wabash rag



D **Bridge** (1:04, 2:03)

Set 'em set 'em set 'em set 'em set 'em set 'em set 'em set 'em set 'em set 'em set 'em set 'em
A7 D7 G7

27

C Set 'em set 'em set 'em set 'em set 'em set 'em
A A7 D7/F♯

33 1/2 *Substitute Fill 1 second time*

set 'em set 'em Doin' that rag that Wabash rag *4th time, go back to* **C**
C A7 D7 G7 C D7 G7 G C

38

E **Interlude** (1:24, 2:31)

(2nd time) spoken: **Everybody set 'em last time for**
A A7 D7/F♯ G7 D7/F♯

43

set 'em *1st time, go back to* **B**
G7 C

47 1/2 3/4 3/4

F **Outro** (2:39)

A A7 D7 D7/F♯ G7 D7 D9

51

Doin' that rag that Wabash rag
C A A7 D7/F♯ G7 C C G7 C7

55

Fill 1 (2:11)
N.C.(C)

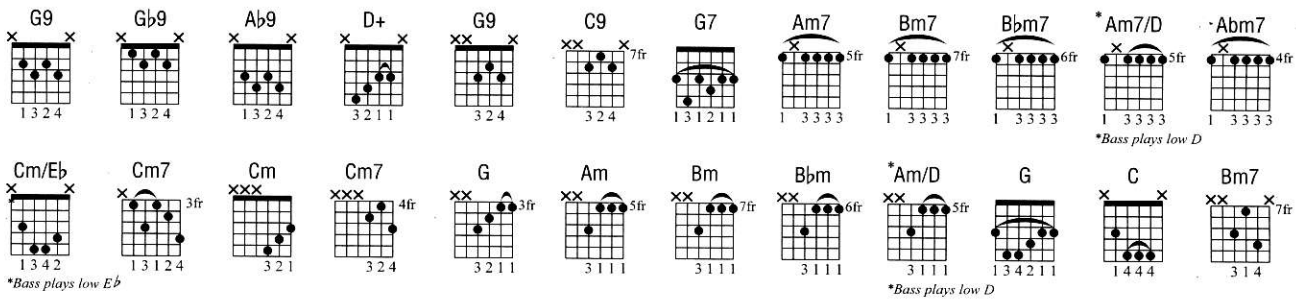
1/2 1/2 1/2

GET MORE TRANSCRIPTIONS
VIDEOS
PREMIUM TABS
USER TABS
GUITAR WORLD TABS
& MORE!
TABS.GUITARWORLD.COM

"STORMY MONDAY" THE ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND

As heard on **AT FILLMORE EAST** (POLYDOR)

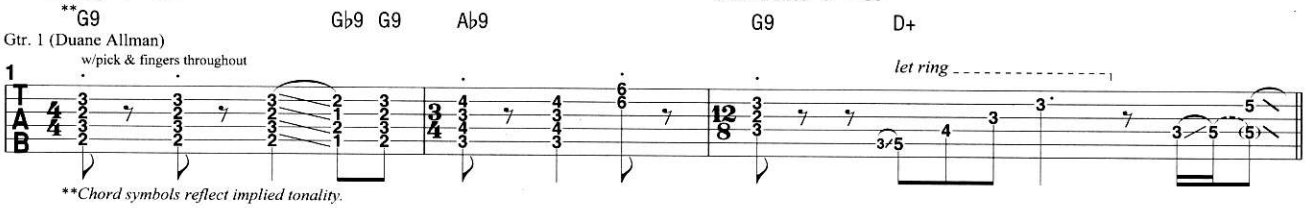
Words and Music by **Aaron "T-Bone" Walker** ✶ *Transcribed by* **Troy Nelson and Steve Gorenberg**



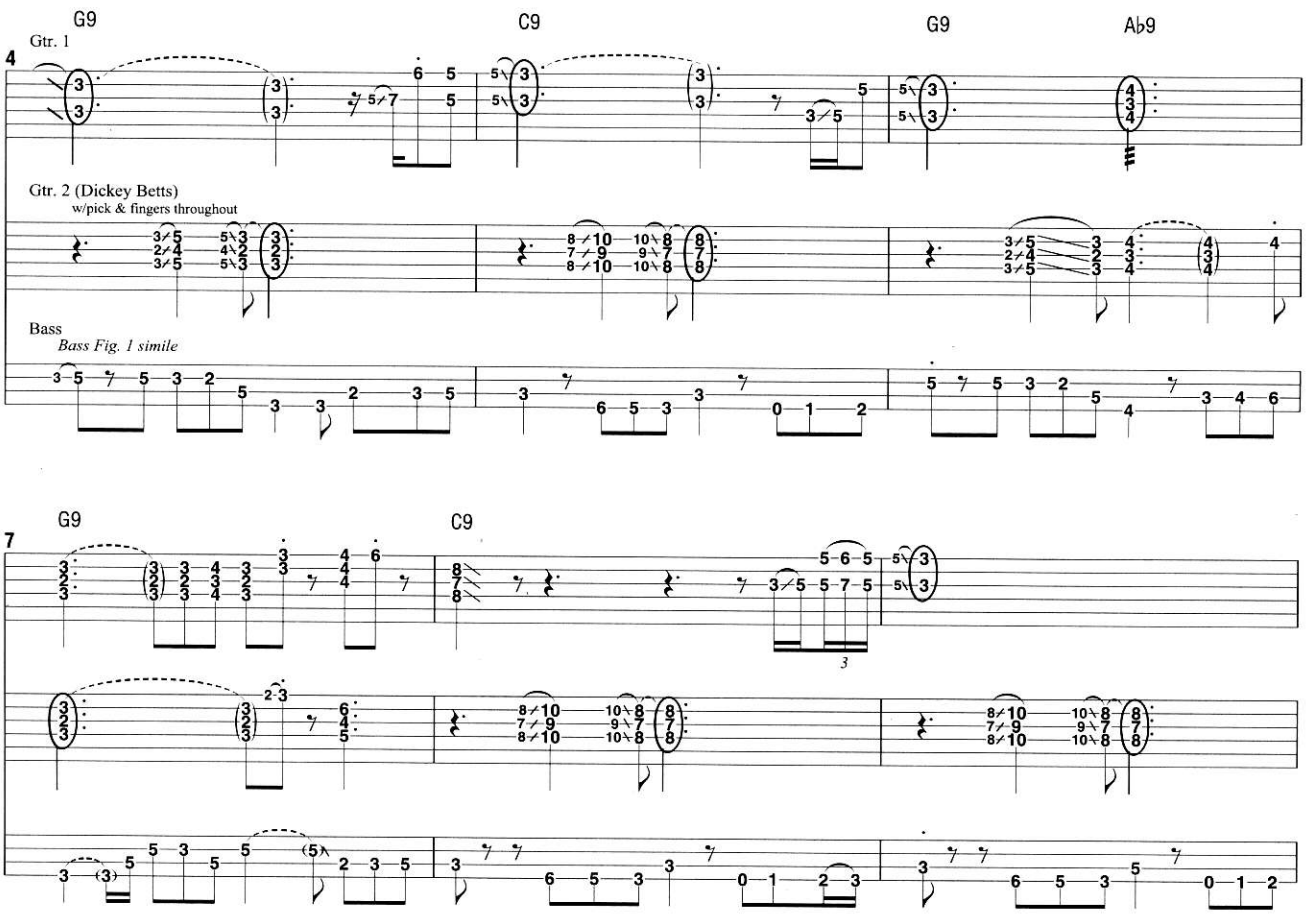
A **Intro** (0:06)

Freely ♩ = 92

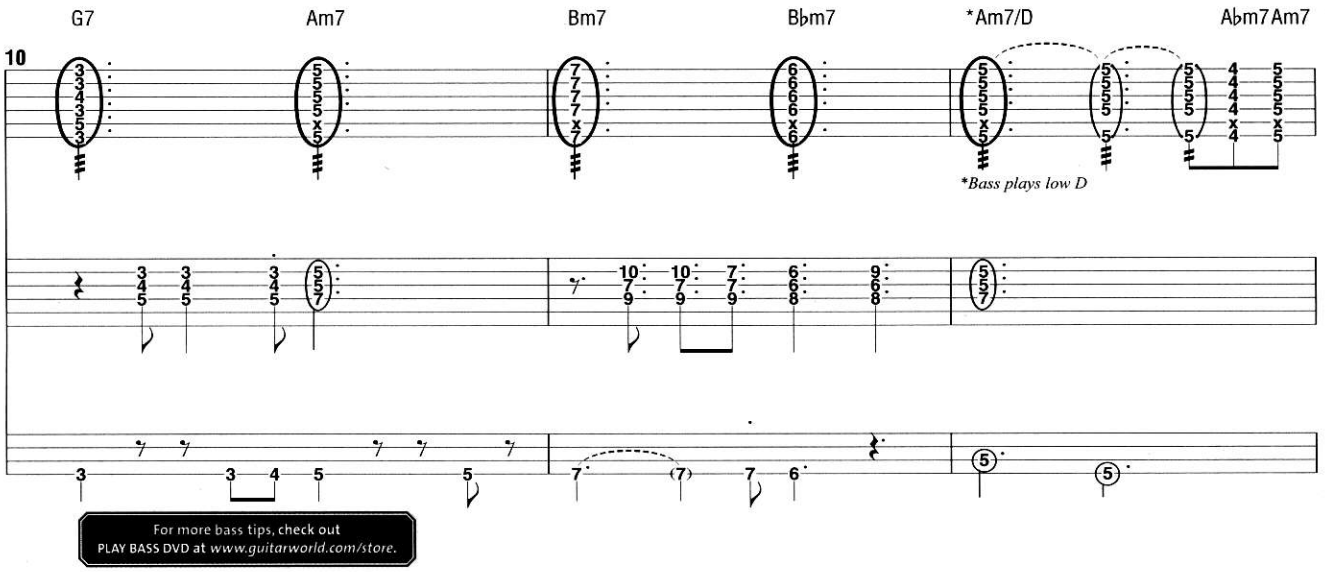
Slow Blues ♩. = 60



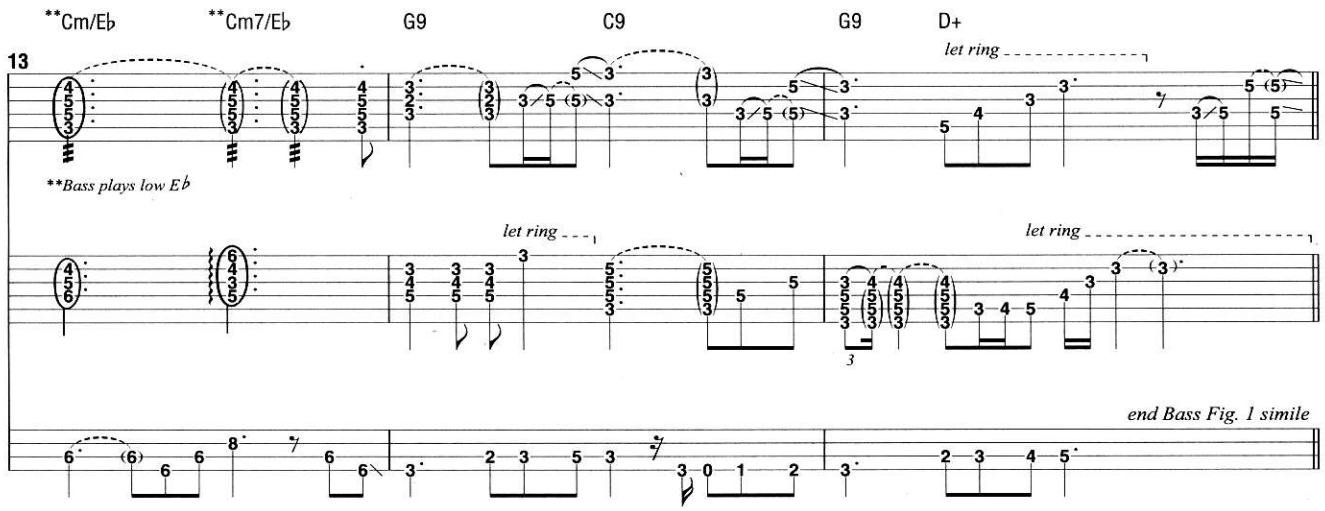
(0:17)



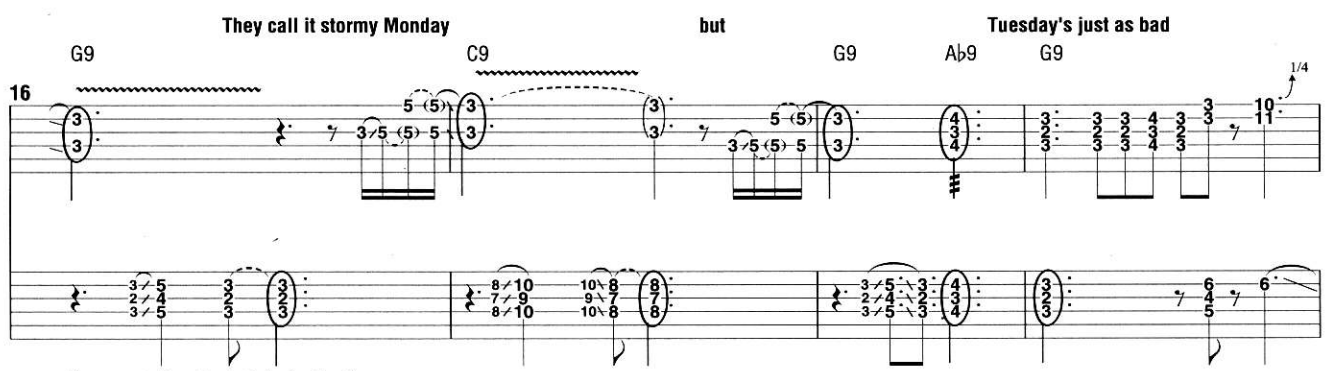
(THEY CALL IT) STORMY MONDAY (STORMY MONDAY BLUES)
COPYRIGHT © 1947; RENEWED 1975 CHERRY RIVER MUSIC CO. (BMI), GREGMARK MUSIC, INC. (BMI), LORD AND WALKER MUSIC PUBLISHING (BMI) AND SONGS OF CHERRY LANE VENTURES (BMI).
GREGMARK MUSIC, INC., LORD AND WALKER MUSIC PUBLISHING AND SONGS OF CHERRY LANE VENTURES ADMINISTERED BY CHERRY RIVER MUSIC CO.
INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT SECURED. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF CHERRY LANE MUSIC COMPANY.



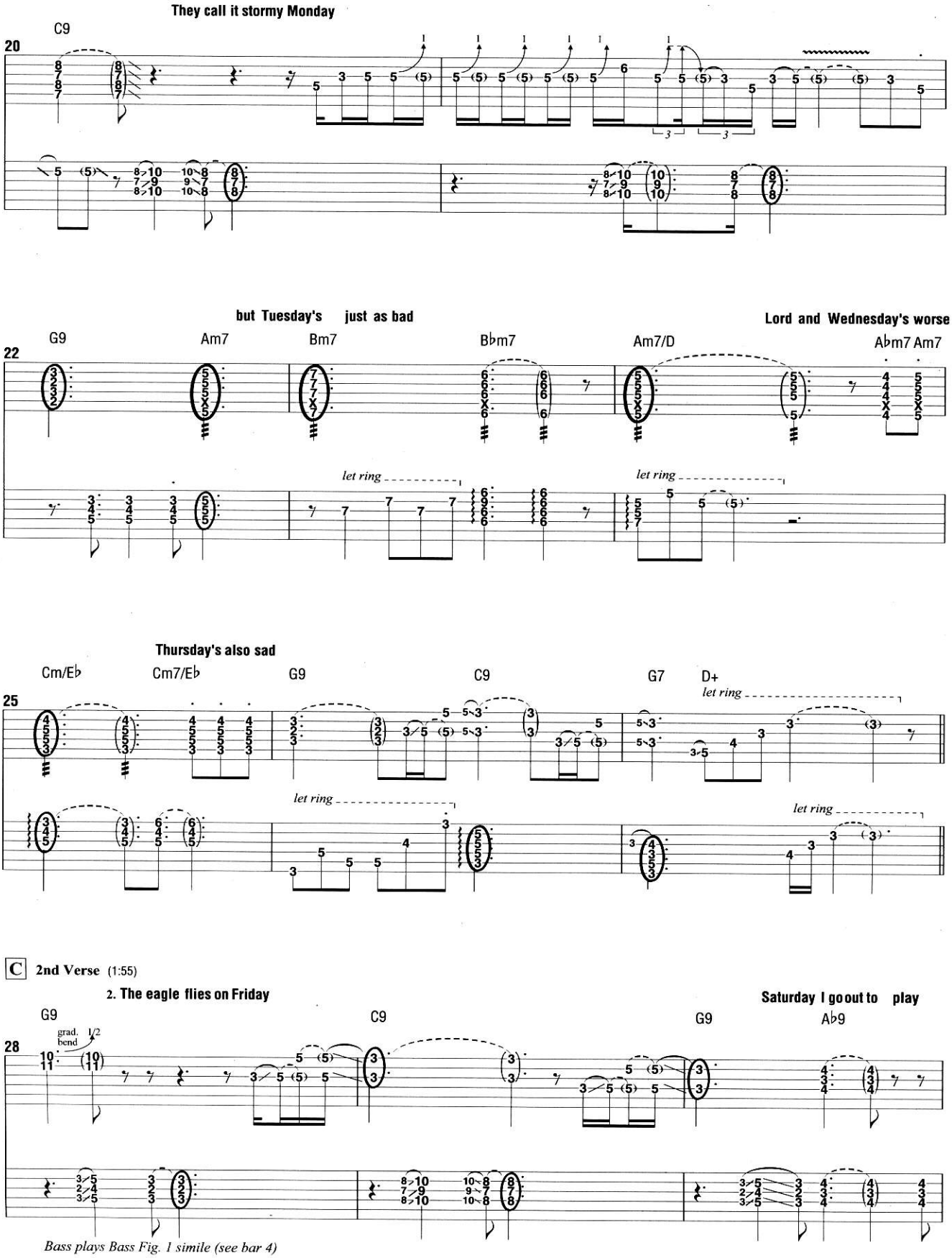
For more bass tips, check out
PLAY BASS DVD at www.guitarworld.com/store.

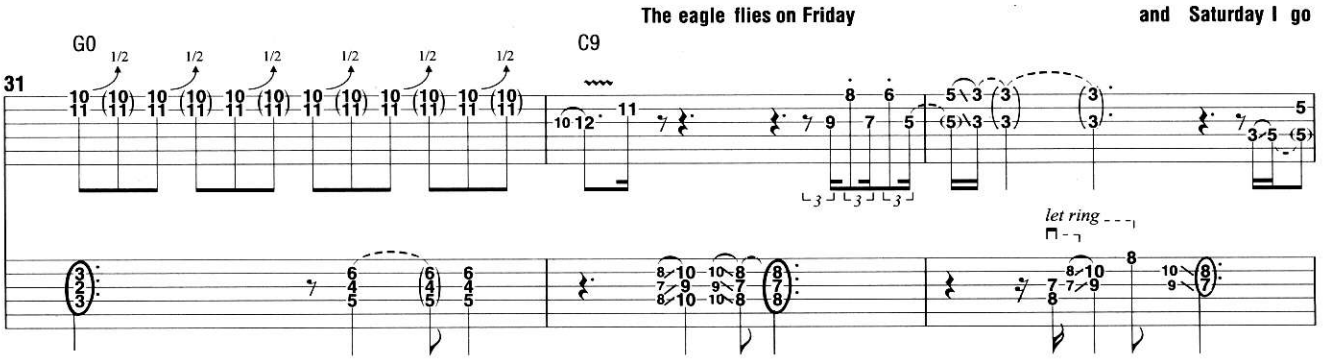


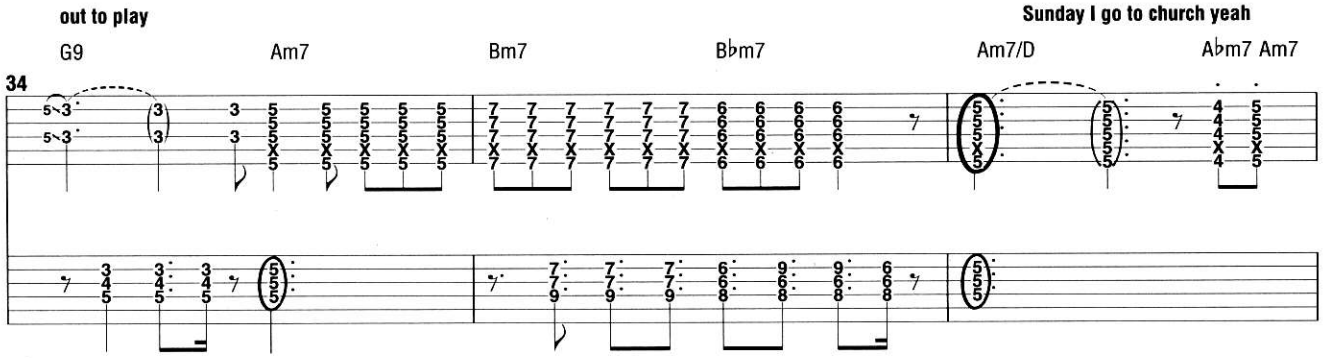
B **1st Verse** (1:06)

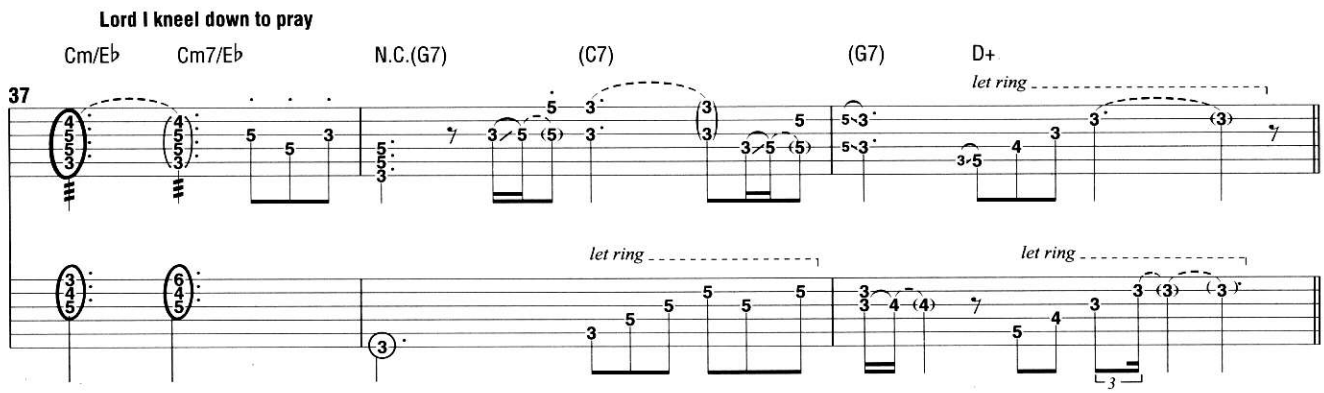


"STORMY MONDAY"

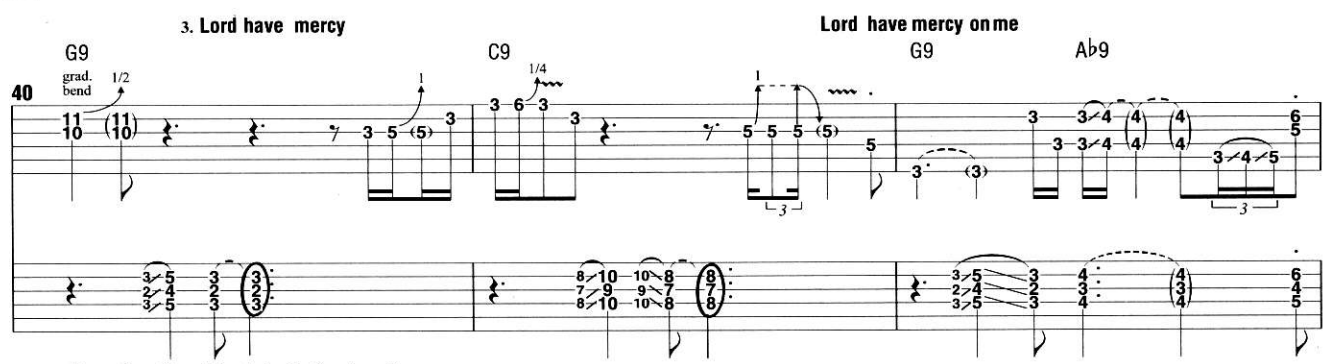






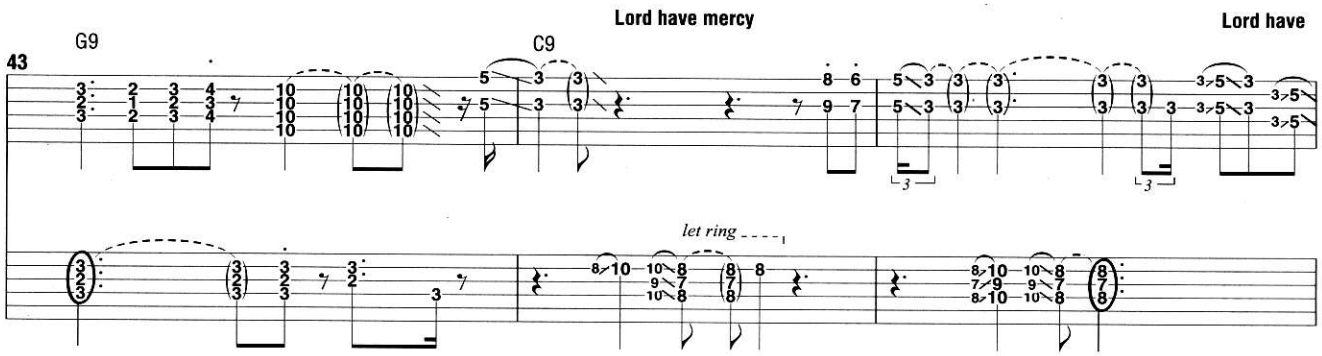


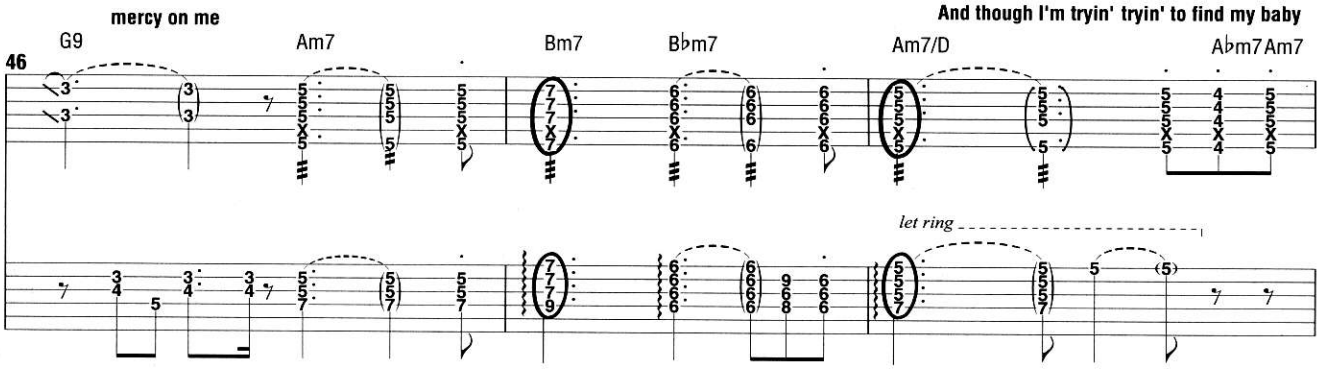
D **3rd Verse** (2:45)

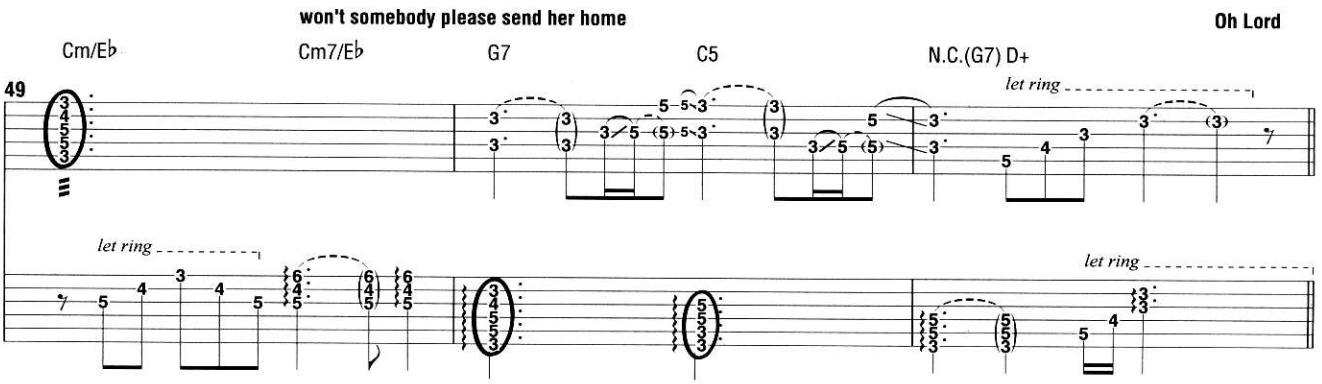


Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 simile (see bar 4)

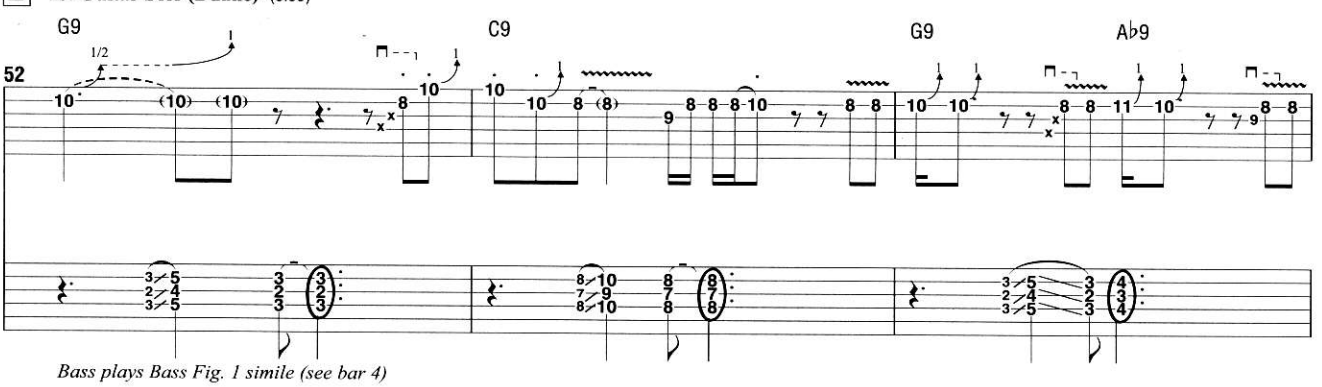
"STORMY MONDAY"



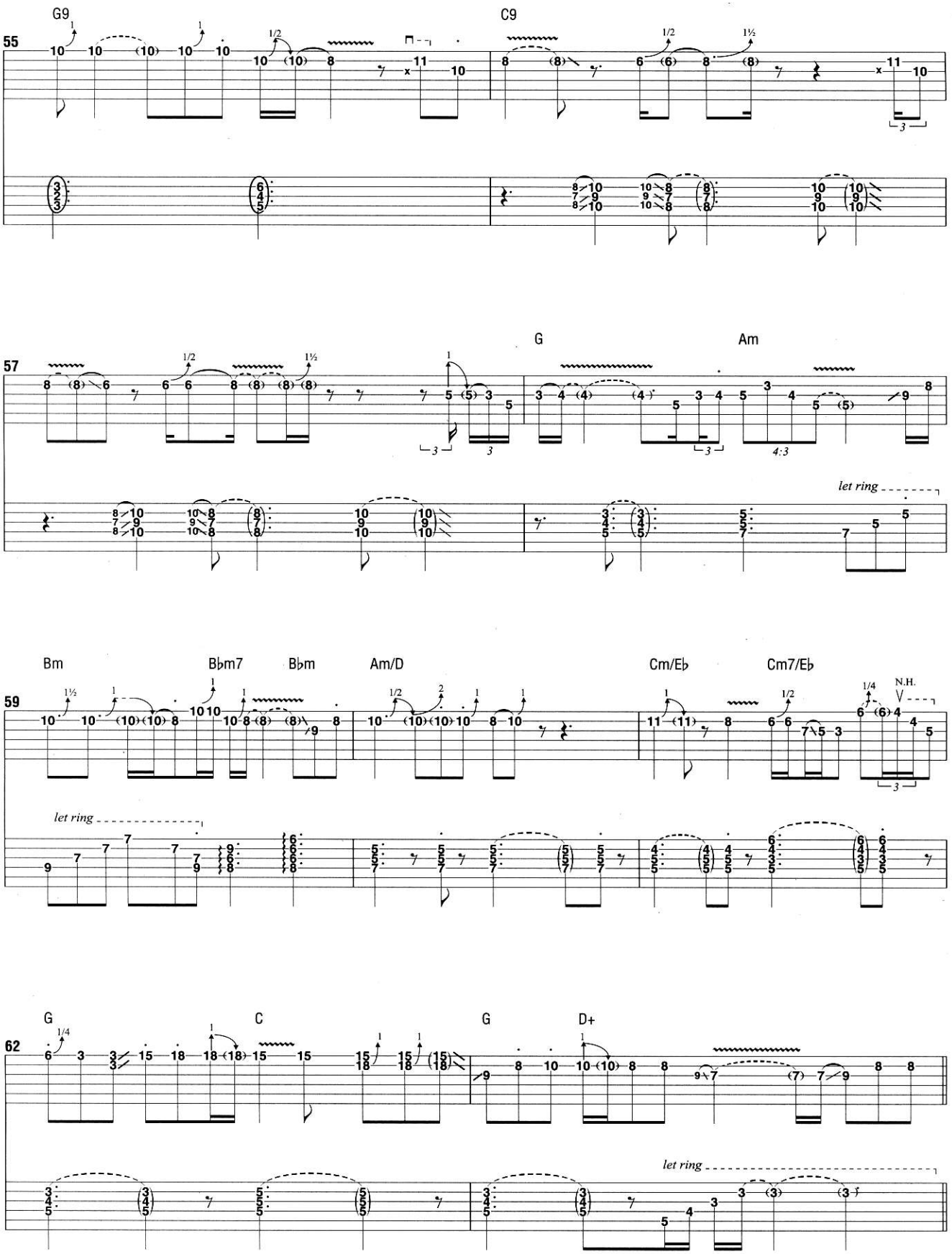




E **1st Guitar Solo (Duane)** (3:35)

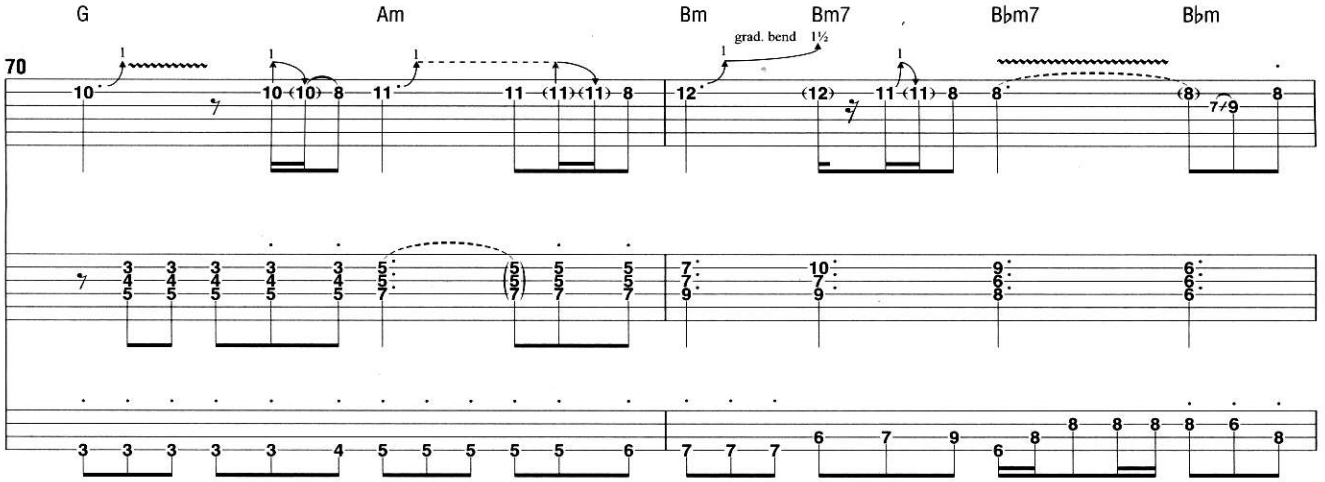


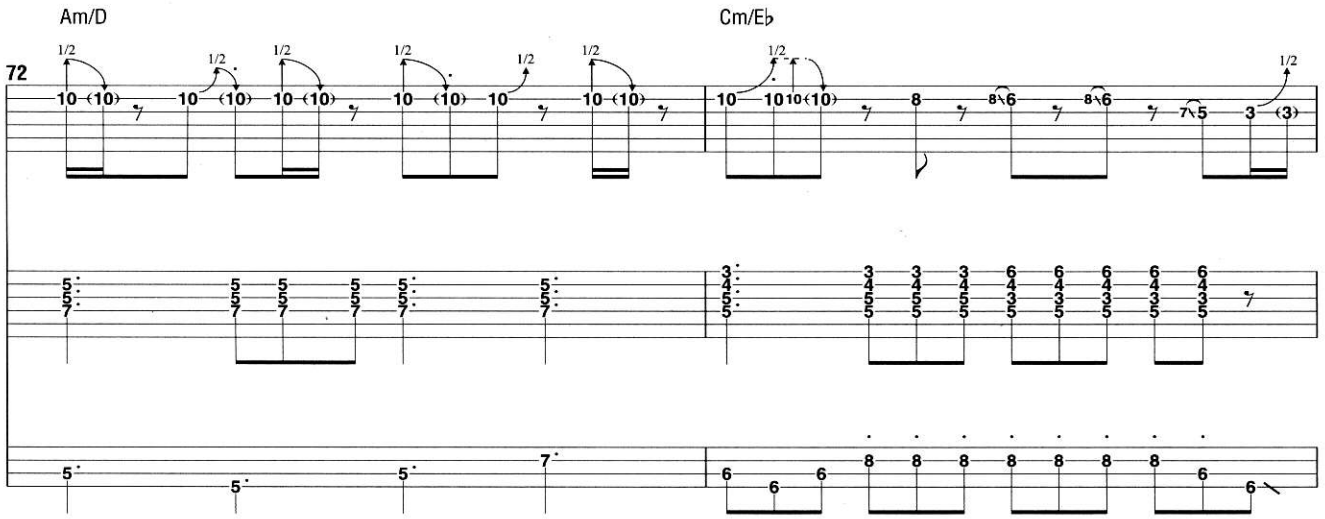
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 simile (see bar 4)

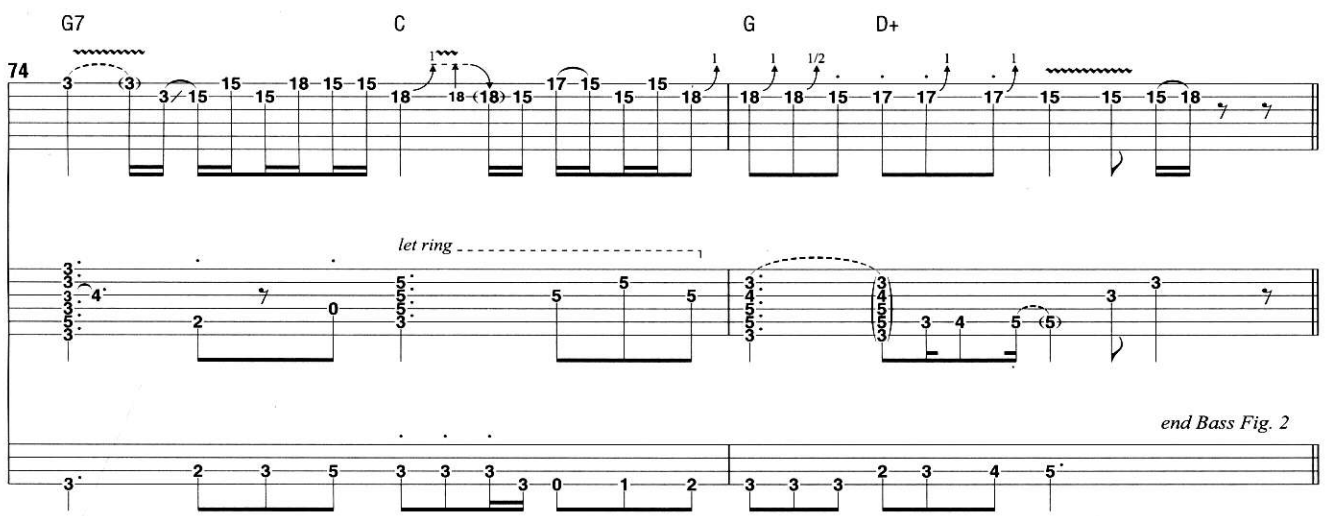

G9
C9
55
G
Am
57
let ring
Bm
B♭m7
B♭m
Am/D
C♭m/E♭
Cm7/E♭
59
N.H.
let ring
G
C
G
D+
62
let ring

"STORMY MONDAY"

F (4:25)


G
Am
Bm
Bm7
B♭m7
B♭m
70
grad. bend 1½

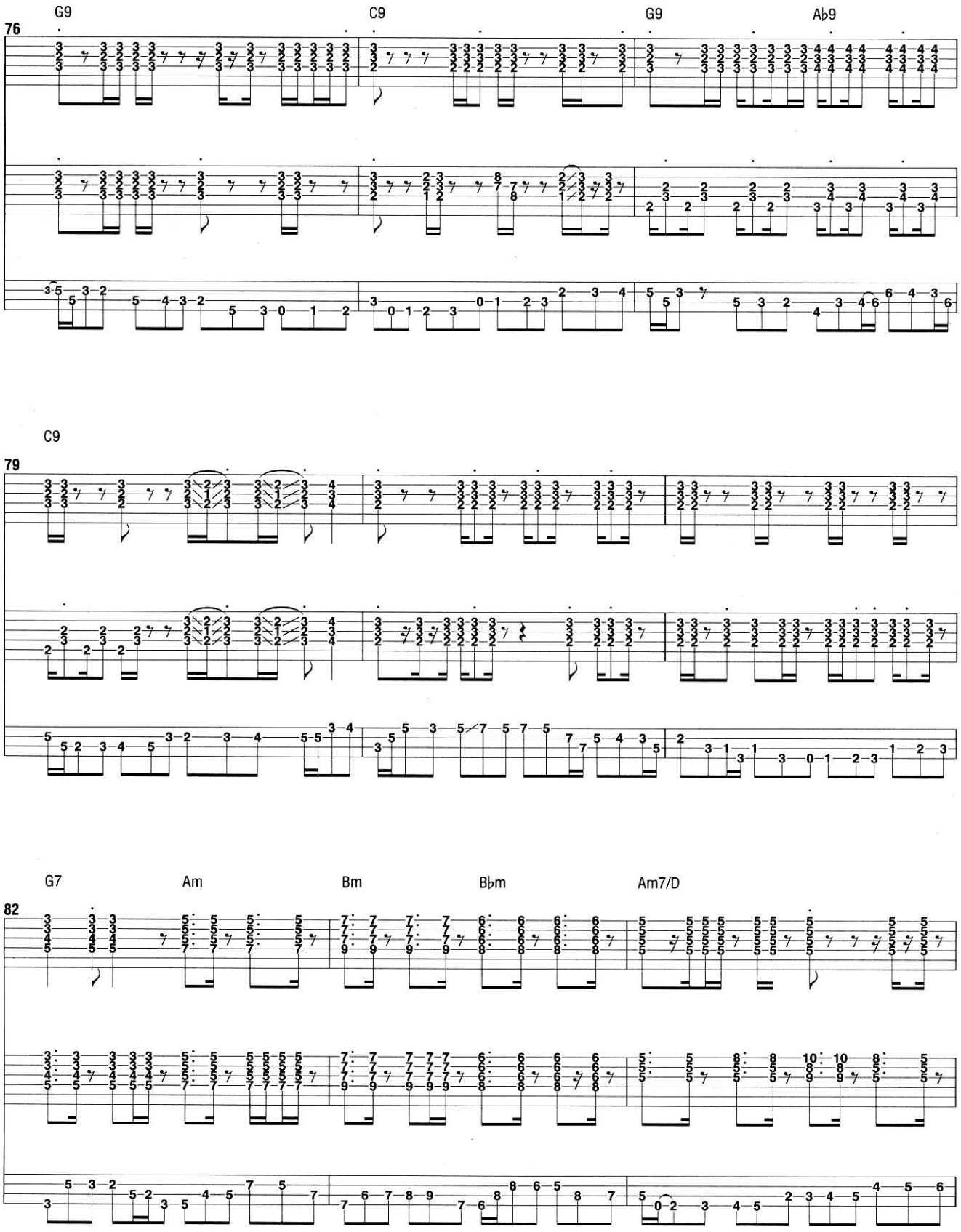

Am/D
Cm/E♭
72
1/2

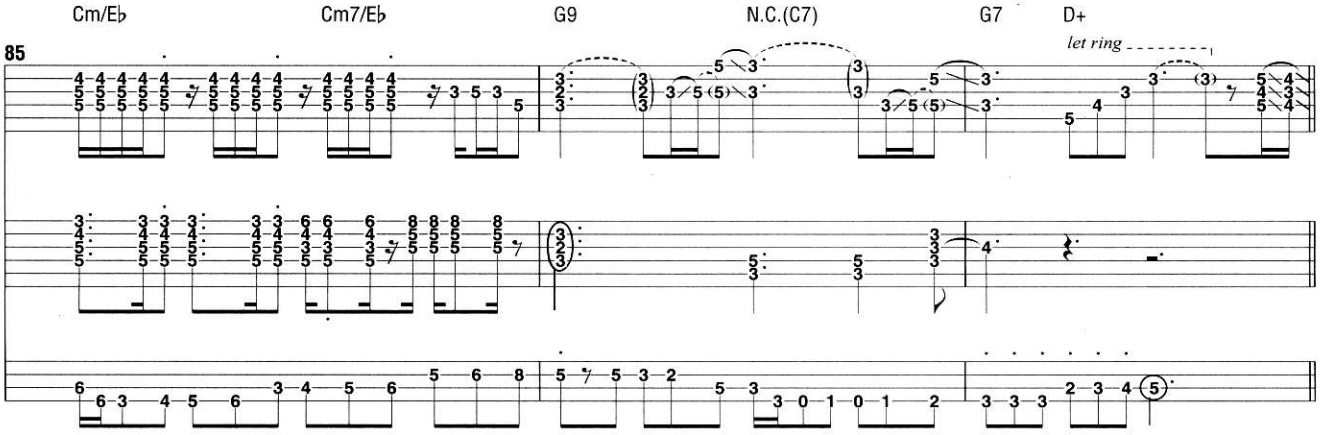

G7
C
G
D+
74
let ring
end Bass Fig. 2

"STORMY MONDAY"

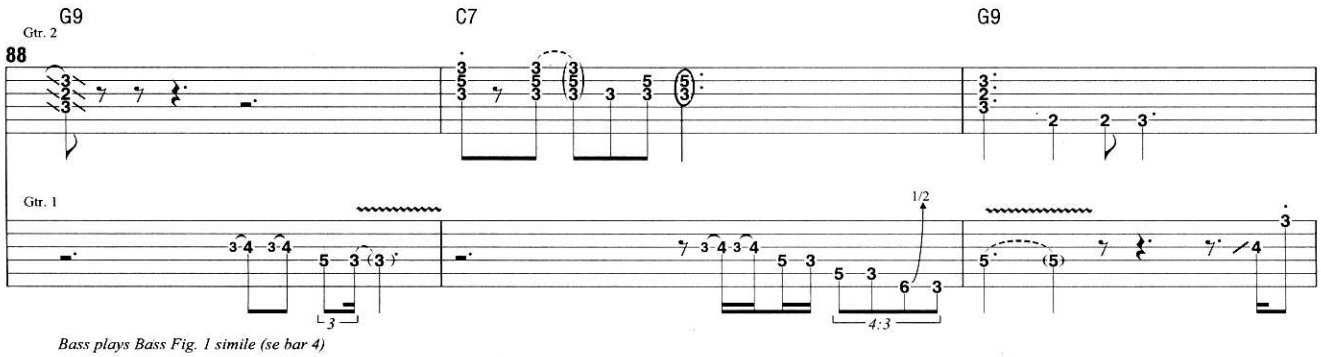
G **Organ Solo** (5:14)

Double-time jazz waltz feel

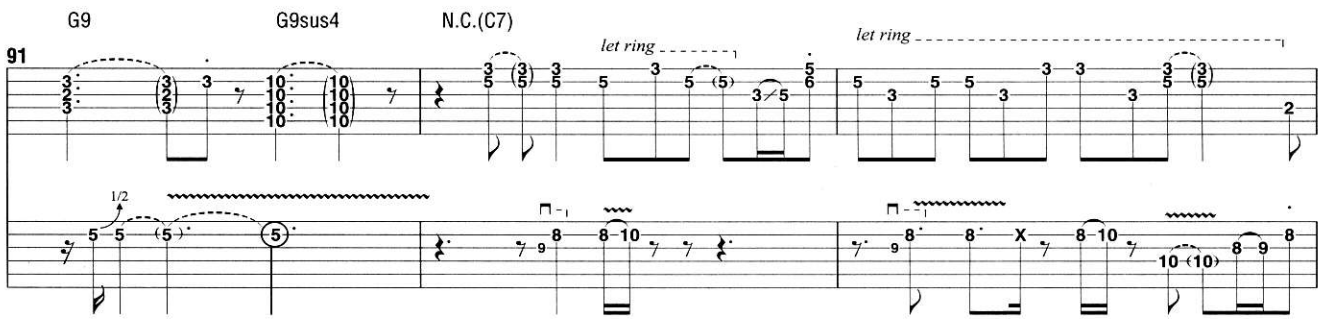


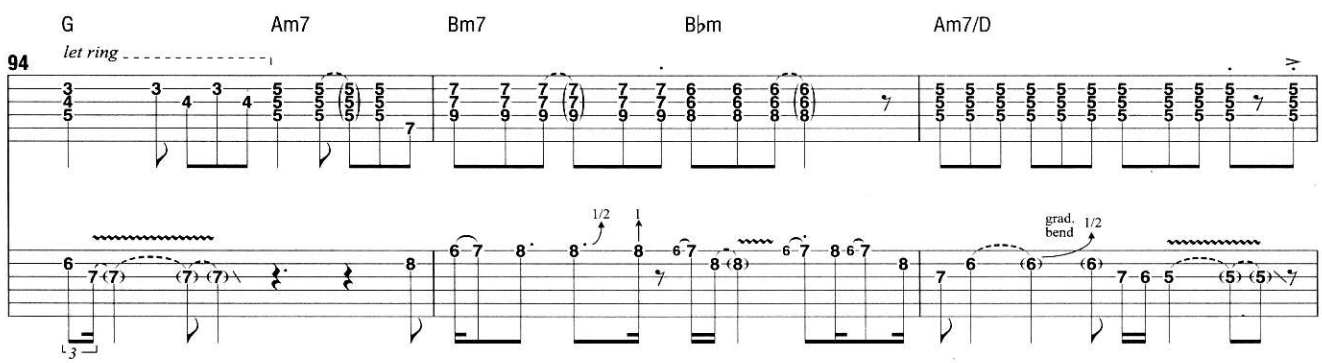


H **2nd Guitar Solo (Dickey)** (6:02)

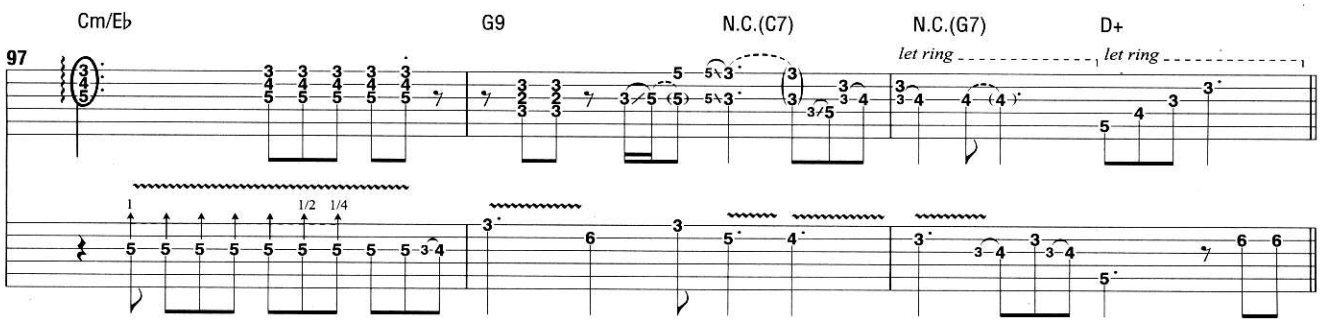


Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 simile (se bar 4)

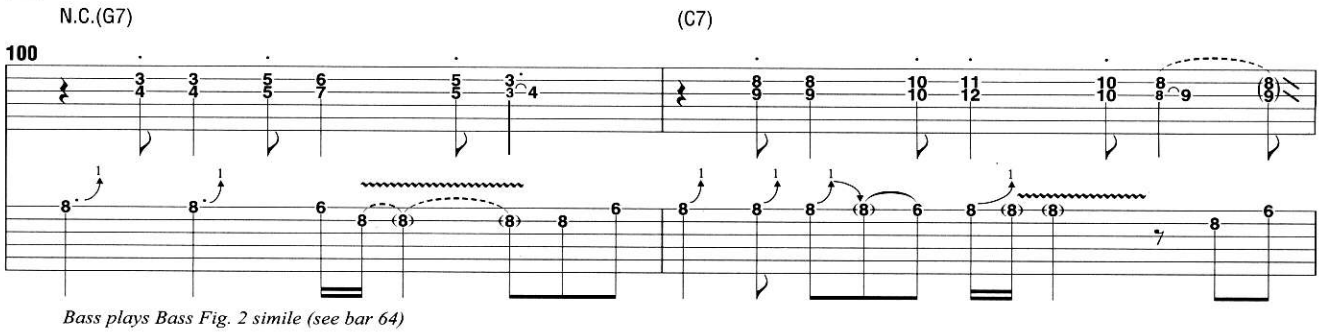




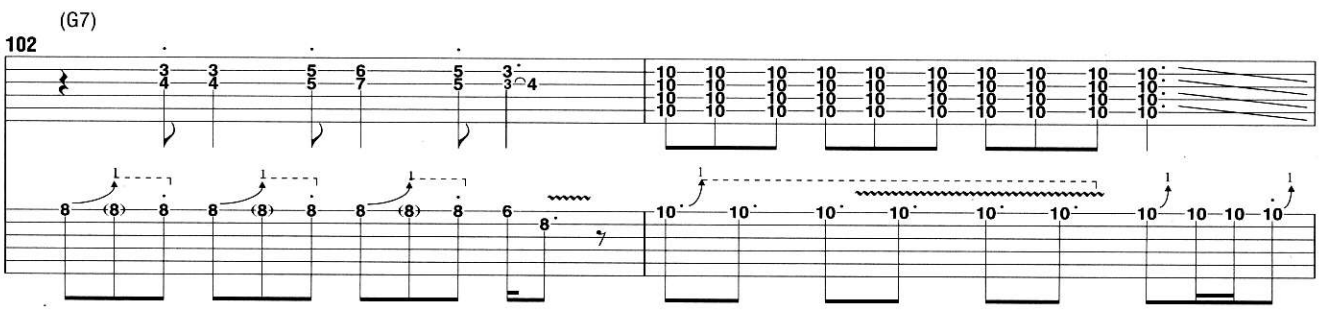
"STORMY MONDAY"

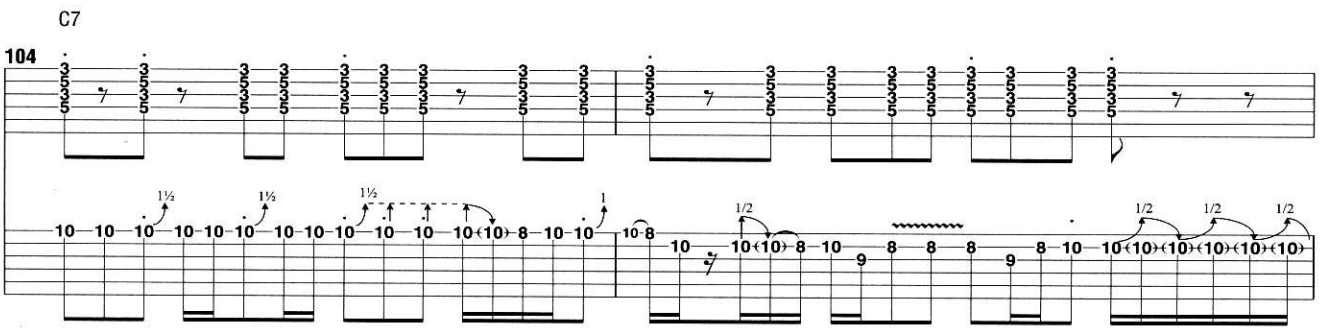


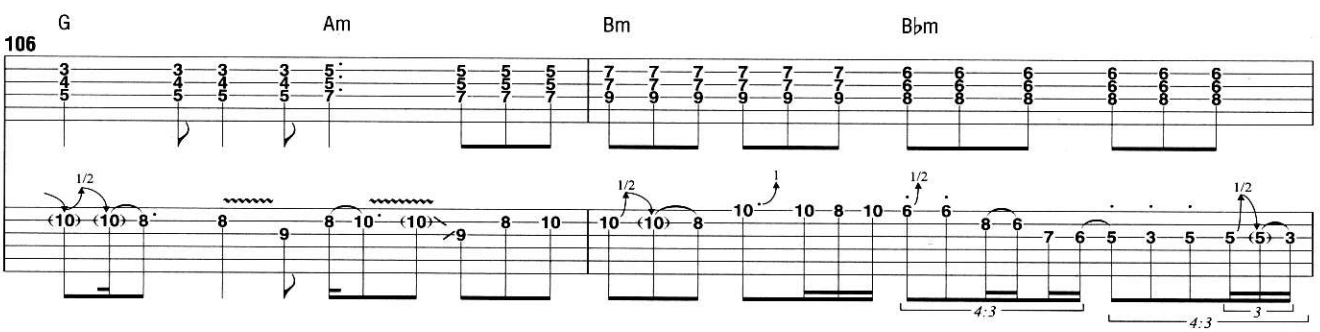
I (6:52)

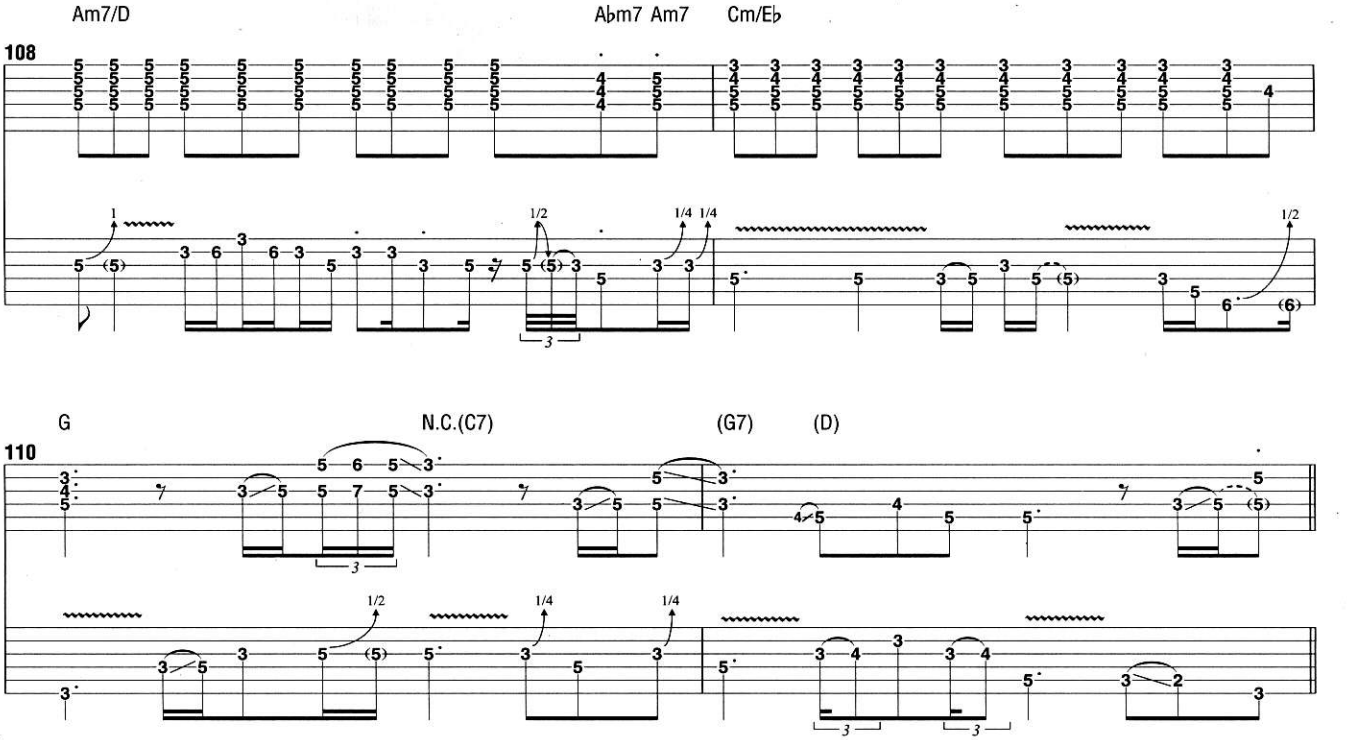


Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 simile (see bar 64)

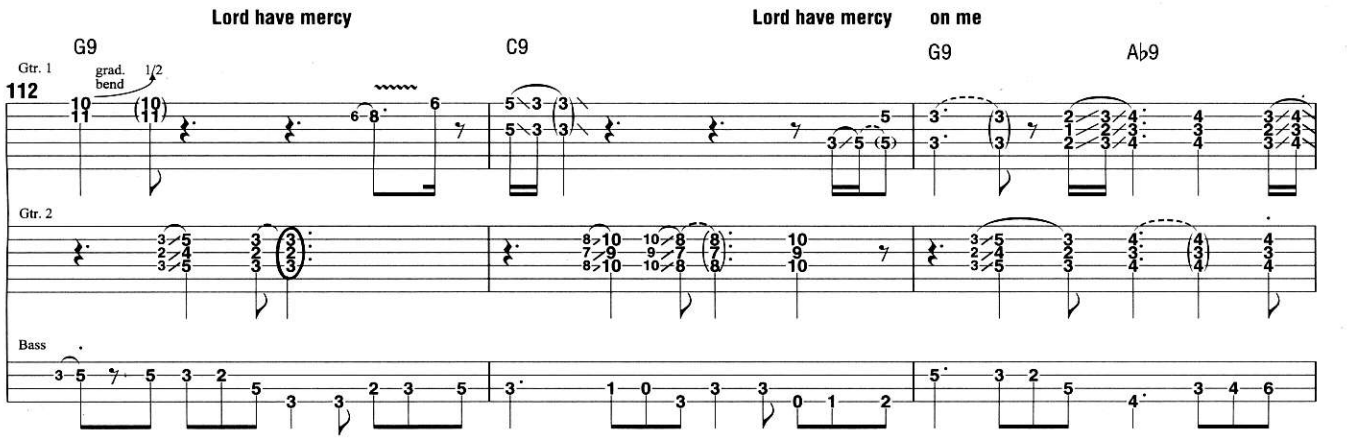




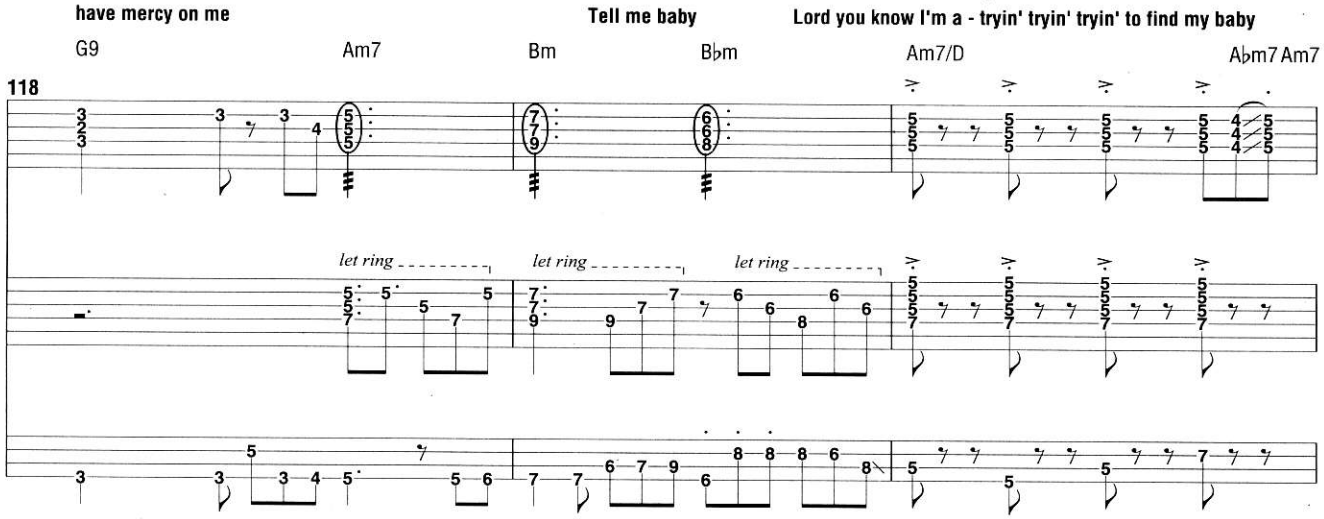


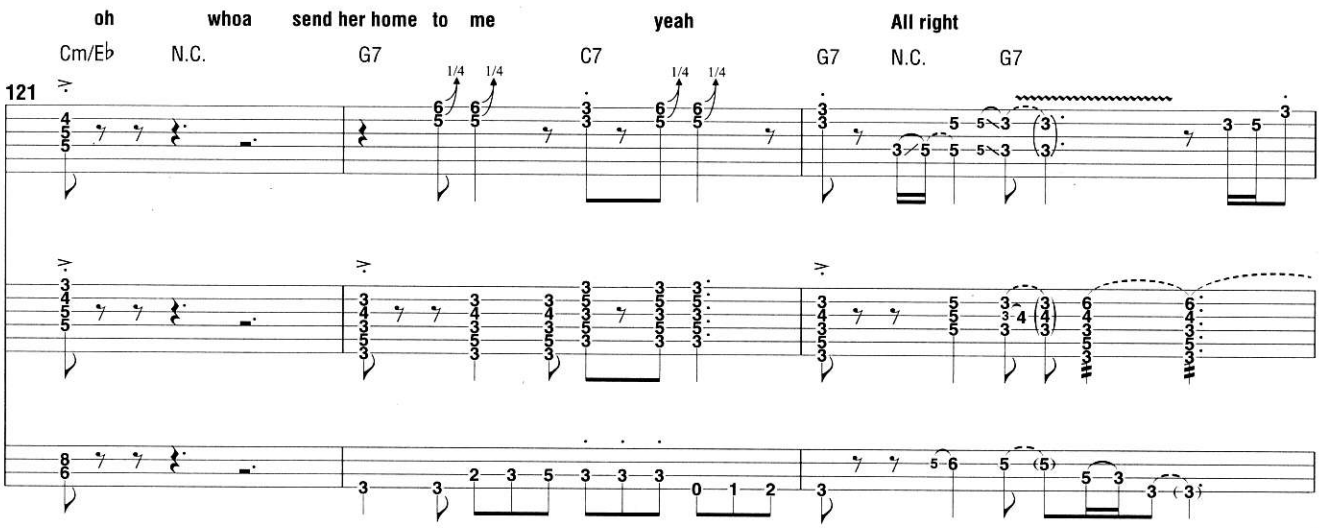


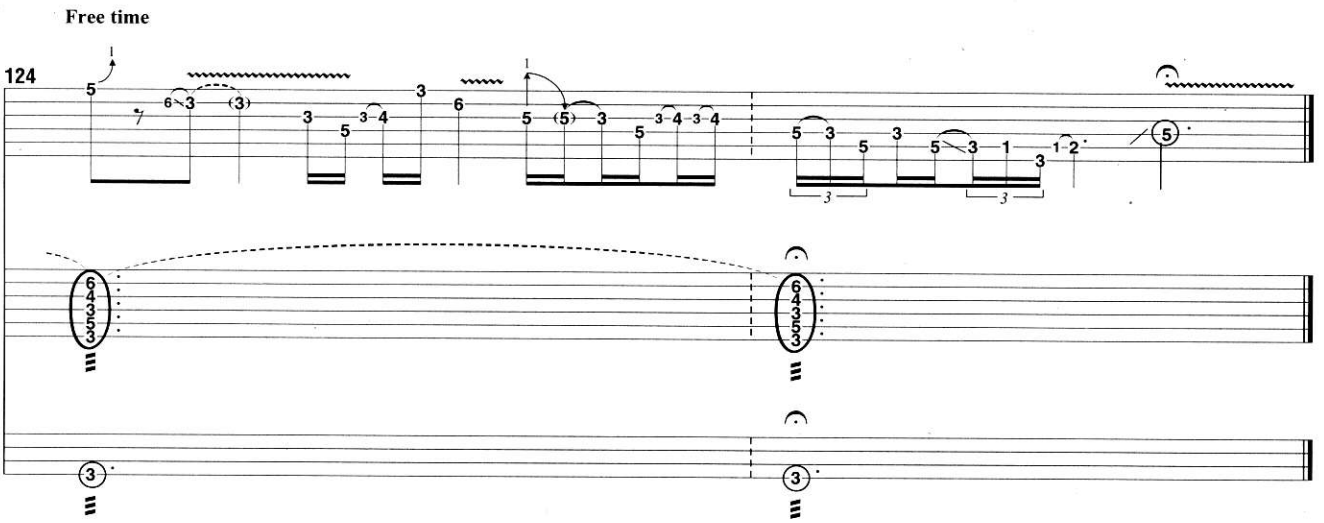
J **4th Verse** (7:42)



"STORMY MONDAY"







indulgeyourself

THE MUSIC ZOO
www.themusiczoo.com